Practical Diſcourſes

Upon Several

Divine Subjects,

Viz.

The Meaſure of Divine Love.
The Natural and Moral Vanity of Man.
That the Law is not made void through Faith.
The Origin and the Relief of all Trouble and Uneaſineſs of Mind.
The Natural and Moral Union of the Soul with God.
The Honour due to good Men, and the Crime of treating them with Scorn and Contempt.
The ſeveral Ways whereby God Addreſſes himſelf to Man.
Of Religious Diſcourſe in Common Converſation.
Of the Fear of Death.
Concerning the Extent of Chriſt's Satisfaction.
Concerning Practical Atheiſm.
Of Walking by Faith——
Concerning Charity to the Poor.
Concerning the Right Uſe of the World.
Concerning the Succeſſive Vanity of Human Life.

An Admonition Concerning two late Books, call'd, *A Diſcourſe of the Love of God.*

Vol. III. and IV.

By *JOHN NORRIS*, M. A. Rector of *Bemerton*, near *Sarum*.

The Third Edition.

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The several Ways whereby God Addresses himself to Man.

VOL. III.

By JOHN NORRIS, M. A. Rector of *Bemerton* near *Sarum.*

The SECOND EDITION.

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BRITISH MUSEUM

VOL. III.

By John Norris, M. A. Rector of Bemerton near Sarum.

The Second Edition.

LONDON

Printed for Samuel Manship at the Ship in Cornhill, near the Royal-Exchange, MDCCI.

To the Right Honourable Thomas Earl of *Pembroke* and *Montgomery*, Baron *Herbert* of *Cardiff*, Lord Privy-Seal, &c. and one of Their Majesties most Honourable Privy Council.

My Lord,

I *Should not presume to make your Lordship a Patron to these* Discourses, *if your Lordship had not been already pleased to make your self so to the* Author *of them; and that in a manner so signal and so beyond the ordinary measures of Generosity, that I was thence encouraged to hope that the same Goodness that obliged me to the most grateful Acknowledgment, would also induce your Lordship to accept of this first Opportunity I have of a publick Expression of it.*

The Discourses which I here venture to send abroad under the Patronage of your Lordship's great Name, were all composed in the Retirement which by your Lordships peculiar Favour I now enjoy, which indeed does so naturally favour the Inclinations of a Thoughtful Mind, and is so advantageously seated, I may say Calculated *for Contemplation, that perhaps it has had some particular Influence upon these Compositions, which it may be will be found a little to savour of the Place of their Production, as*

Mens Diſpoſitions are ſaid to Symbolize with the Planet *of their* Nativity.

For this Reaſon I believe it has happened, that theſe Diſcourſes run more upon a Philoſophick Strain, than any other Compoſitions of mine do of this Nature and Character. And I am glad they do ſo; not only becauſe they will afford a more ſuitable Entertainment to your Lordſhip's Contemplative *and* Philoſophick Genius, (*if a Perſon that has ſo much brighter Thoughts at command of his own, can be ſaid to be* entertain'd *by any thing that comes from ſo vulgar a Hand,*) *but alſo becauſe I think we cannot do better Service to* Religion, *than by reſolving the Practical Duties of it into Principles of Philoſophy, or make a better uſe of Philoſophick Notions, than to employ them in the Service, and for the intereſt of Religion.*

How far theſe Ends are ſerved in the Contents of the following Papers, every Reader has now ſome ſort of Right to judge; but few I believe will be found in any Order or Claſs of Men ſo well qualified to do it as your Lordſhip, *whoſe general inſight into the whole Compaſs of Learning, and whoſe particular Excellency, even to nicety and exactneſs, in the more refined Theories of* Philoſophy, *are ſo well known to the World, that they deſervedly render you at once the* Admiration *and the* Glory *of a nice and inquiſitive Age, which is ſo ingaged in the view of your Perſonal Excellencies, that your* Birth, Quality,

lity, and great Station make the leaſt part of your Character; as the Eye is ſo fill'd and taken up with the Luſter *of the Sun, as hardly to mind the* Height *of the Orb from whence it ſhines.*

My Lord, I know not whether ſuch Qualifications as theſe make you any whit the fitter for the Patronage of theſe Diſcourſes, or of the Author of them, who may have too much reaſon to dread the Severity of ſuch a Judge, and whoſe intereſt might have adviſed him to ſeek out for a leſs judicious Patron, one than was more of a Level with himſelf. But the great Obligations I am under to your Lordſhip above all other Men, make it my Duty to addreſs my ſelf and my (however mean) Performances to your Lordſhip, which I do with all that Reverential Deference which is owing to your Lordſhip's Quality and Perſonal Greatneſs, with all that Modeſty and Concern that ought to accompany ſo defective a Preſent, and with all that Senſe of Gratitude which becomes that ſingular Favour wherewith (to the Hazard of your own Judgment) your Lordſhip has been generouſly pleaſed lately to honour

Your Lordſhip's

Very Humble,

Obedient and Oliged Servant

J. NORRIS.

To the READER.

YOU have here ſome of thoſe Thoughts wherewith I entertain my Solitude, and which have help'd to fill up ſome of thoſe looſer Hours which hang upon a *Country-Life*, and which I think are thus much more accountably ſpent than in *beating* about after News, or holding tedious and impertinent Chat about State-Concerns. It is my ſerious and real Judgment that theſe Diſcourſes both in regard of their Subjects and the manner wherein they are handled, may be fitted for publick Uſe and Service, and may contribute to improve both the Theory and the Practice of Religion; and for this Reaſon I am induced to Communicate them to the Publick. As for any Honour or Reputation that may happen to redound to my ſelf by them, as I hope it was not my governing motive in this Undertaking, ſo do I deſire to renounce and diſclaim it, partly as a thing that is not my *Due*, (for what pretence can a *Creature* and a *Sinner* have to any ſuch thing as *Glory*?) and partly as too vain and too empty a Good for a Rational Spirit to take up with, eſpecially having ſo many greater things to imploy both

both his Thoughts and his Deſires upon, having a *God* and a *Conſcience* to whom he may ſtudy to approve, and with thoſe *well done* he may without any great Self-denial, content himſelf. If therefore my good Reader, you happen to find here any new Notion diſcover'd, or any uſeful and important Truth clear'd, or any Duty of Religion rationally accounted for, or affectionately and advantagiouſly recommended; if in ſhort, you find either your Head inlightned, or your Heart warmed and put into a quicker *Motion* by any thing offer'd to your Conſideration in theſe Diſcourſes, beſtow not your Praiſes or Commendations upon the Author of them, who would not deſerve them if he deſired them, or dared to take them; but rather joyn with him in aſcribing all the Glory to the great Teacher and Inſtructer of Mankind, to him who ſhines upon all our Minds with the Beams of his Divine Light, and informs us (even while we think we inſtruct one another) in the ſecret receſs of our Reaſon; to him who is the Subſtantial Wiſdom of the Eternal Father, and the Light of all his Creatures, in whom are hid all the Treaſures of Wiſdom and Knowledge, and who is the *true Light that enlightens* both you and me, and *every Man that comes into the World*; whoſe is the Kingdom and the Power, and to whom be the Glory. *Amen.*

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A DISCOURSE CONCERNING *The Measure of Divine Love, with the Natural and Moral Grounds upon which it stands.*

Mat. 22. 37.

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

A Very just and reasonable, but sure, one would think, a very needless Injunction. For need any Power or Faculty be under any other Law, than that of its own *Nature*, to delight in its proper Object? Does the Sense want a Precept to be pleased with sensible

Good? Need we addreſs our ſelves to the Eye to perſuade it to love Light, or take pains to exhort the Ear to delight in harmonious Sounds? No, the Order of Nature does here ſuperſede all other Methods of Engagement, and why then ſhould there be need of any Command to a *Rational* Soul to love *God?* Does not an intelligible Good bear the ſame proportion to a reaſonable Nature, as a ſenſible Good does to Senſe; and is not God the ſame to the Soul, as Muſick is to the Ear, or as Light to the Eye? Yes certainly, and infinitely more: For theſe things, tho they are the *proper* Goods of their reſpective Powers, yet they are not wholly commenſurate, and fully adjuſted to their Capacities; whence it is that *the Eye is not ſatisfied with ſeeing, nor the Ear with hearing.* But now God is not only the proper good of the Soul (as Light is of the Eye) but is withal a Good ſo tranſcendently excellent as to be able to fill the whole Capacity of its intellectual Powers. The Good of *his* ſublime Nature is more than commenſurate to the moſt ſtretch't Appetite of *ours*; nay, were our Capacity infinite, he would be ſufficient to fill it; for he fills his own, and is infinitely happy in himſelf. And what need then of a Command to a rational Creature to love its proper Good, and a Good ſo infinitely lovely?

But

But for ſatisfaction to this, 'tis to be conſider'd, firſt, that as in *Geometry* ſome plain and obvious Propoſitions are laid down not ſo much for the ſake of their own Diſcovery, as in order to further Theory, which, as a Superſtructure is to be rais'd upon thoſe Foundations; ſo in *Morality* and Divinity ſome practical Propoſitions or Precepts, tho in themſelves never ſo clear and evident, muſt yet be ſet down, if 'twere only for the ſake of Method and Order, and to lay a Bottom for what is to be further built upon thoſe Principles. And accordingly the Love of God being the fundamental Principle of all natural Religion and Virtue, or (as our Lord here terms it) the *firſt and great Commandment*, upon which all the Duties of the firſt Table do immediately, and thoſe of the ſecond remotely depend, it was very requiſite that there ſhould be an expreſs Precept concerning it, tho it be never ſo *evident* that we *ought* to love God, and withal never ſo *neceſſary* and unavoidable that we *ſhould*.

Beſides, 'tis alſo ſecondly to be conſider'd, that what does here more principally and more directly fall under the Precept, is not the *Act* of loving God in general, but the ſpecial *degree* and manner of that Act, that it be with the whole Power and full Capacity of the Man. Now tho it be of it ſelf

ſo plain and evident that God is to be loved, and withal ſo natural and neceſſary, that we ſhould love him in ſome degree or other, yet neither is it ſo plain nor ſo neceſſary that we ſhould love him up to the degree here ſpecifi'd, with the whole Weight and Streſs of our Love. This is not a Propoſition of ſo bright an evidence as to ſhine forth by its own Light, but requires a Train of Argument and Conſequence to make it appear reaſonable, and muſt be proved in a way of Science and Demonſtration. It was indeed below the Dignity and Majeſty of the Supreme Law-giver to do that, but therefore it was the more neceſſary for him to uſe his Authority, to make it matter of expreſs Precept, and to lay it as an eternal Law upon every rational Spirit that comes into being, *Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy Soul, and with all thy mind.*

The great Difficulty of this great Commandment, next to the *Practiſing* of it, is how to *Underſtand* it; and therefore I ſhall firſt of all inquire into the true Senſe and Import of it, and then into the Reaſon and Bottom upon which it ſtands.

As to the *Senſe*, I think the higheſt that is generally put upon theſe Words amounts to no more than this, That God is to be the prime and principle Object of our Love and Delight;

Delight; That we are to love him in a *Superlative* way, above all other things whatſoever, ſo as to loſe any Good, or ſuffer any Evil rather than commit the leaſt Sin againſt him; That we are always to perfer him in our Love, chuſing to obey him rather than Man, and to pleaſe him rather than ſatisfie our own Will, and to enjoy him rather than any worldly or carnal Pleaſure, ſaying with the Pſalmiſt, *Thy Loving-kindneſs is better than Life*, and with the Church in the *Canticles*, *Thy Love is better than Wine*.

And if our Love be thus order'd, if we ſtand thus affected towards God, we are then allowed according to the common Opinion to Love *Creatures*, to delight and ſolace our ſelves in them, to unite our Souls in ſome meaſure to them, and to reckon them among the props and ſtays of our life, and as the Ingredients of its preſent Happineſs. Nor is there any harm preſumed in all this, ſtill provided that God be uppermoſt in our Hearts, have the largeſt ſhare in our Affections, and be ſeated upon the *Throne* of the Soul, who though permitted to love other things, is yet to look upon God as her greateſt Good, and accordingly to reſerve her brighteſt and pureſt flame for his Altar; to love him with the choice, with the flower of her Affection, and be ready to part with any other good when it once comes

in competition with the Love of God.

In this I think I ſpeak the ſenſe of the common Interpreters, who for want of a ſuitable Foundation could not well carry the Building higher, but were forced to take up with an Explication far below the expreſs Letter of the Text, and to make this to be all that was ſignified by loving God with all the heart, with all the ſoul, and with all the mind, that we love him chiefly and principally, *beſt* and *moſt*. Sure they could not but be ſenſible that herein they did not riſe up to the Letter of the Text, which manifeſtly requires a more elevated ſenſe: But they could not advance higher without Building in the Air; and were therefore forced to cramp the ſenſe of this great Commandment, and to put ſuch a Conſtruction upon it, not as the expreſs Words of it *require*, but as their Hypotheſis would *bear*.

I ſay as their Hypotheſis would bear; for the Hypotheſis theſe Men go upon, ſeems to be this; They ſuppoſe that other things beſides God are truly and properly the Goods of the Soul, and contribute as efficient Cauſes to its happineſs: That ſenſible Objects contain in themſelves ſomewhat anſwerable to what we feel by their Occaſion, and are withal the proper Cauſes of ſuch our Senſations: That the

Bodies

Bodies that ſurround us do really act in and upon us, not only by making impreſſion upon our *Bodies*, and ſtriking upon our Organs of *Senſe*, but alſo by raiſing and exciting, thoſe Senſations our Spirits are conſcious of, ſo as to be the true efficient Cauſes of our *Pleaſure* and our *Pain*: That the Fire gives us that ſentiment of Heat which we feel when we approach it: and, That Wine cauſes in us that pleaſing Taſte which we feel when we drink it: And the like.

Now I confeſs, if this *Hypotheſis* be true, if ſenſible Objects do really act upon our Souls, and are the proper efficient Cauſes of thoſe pleaſing Senſations which we feel there, then 'twill neceſſarily follow, that a certain portion of my Love is due to theſe ſenſible Objects: for, if theſe Objects produce Pleaſure in me, then they do me good, they perfect my Being, and render it more happy; and if they do me good, then in their proportion they are my good; and if they are in any degree my good, then they are ſo far lovely; and if they are any way lovely, then ſo far they ought to be loved. But now, if ſome part of our Love be due to ſenſible Objects (as upon this *Hypotheſis* it is) then 'tis impoſſible that God ſhould have a right to *all* of it; and conſequently, to love him with all the heart, and all the

ſoul, and all the mind, can ſignifie no more than to love him principally and above all, to give him the *Preference* in our Love. I ſay the *Preference*, for it ſeems the Creatures put in for a ſhare; and if they have a part, 'tis impoſſible that God ſhould have the whole: they muſt then both go ſharers in our Affection, and the only Priviledge which God can claim upon this *Hypotheſis*, is, to have the *largeſt* ſhare in our Love.

Whether this *Hypotheſis* be true or no, ſhall be conſider'd in it's proper place; in the mean while it may ſerve as a ſtrong Preſumption, that it is not, that the Explication which is founded upon it falls ſo very ſhort of the literal Emphaſis of the Text, *Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy ſoul, and with all thy mind.* But it is to love God at this rate, to love him only principally and more than any thing elſe? Does this exhauſt the ſenſe of this great Commandment? Can he be ſaid with any tolerable Senſe to love God with all his heart, all his ſoul, and all his mind, that only loves him above other things, at the ſame time allowing other things a ſhare in his Love? Can he be ſaid to love God with *all* his Love that loves him only with a *Part*? What though that part be the larger Part, 'tis but a Part ſtill; and is a *Part* the *Whole*? What Logick, or what Gram mar, will endure this?

I think it therefore very evident, that the Words of this great Law do call for a higher ſenſe. And what can *that* be ſhort of this (which indeed is what in ordinary conſtruction they import) that we ought to love God not only with the Beſt and Moſt, but with the Whole of our Affection; that we love him *intirely*, not only with an integrity of Parts, but with an integrity of Degrees; that we love him not only with every Capacity, Paſſion, and Faculty, with the Underſtanding ſuppoſe; Will and Affections (here expreſt by *Heart*, *Soul*, and *Mind*) but in every degree of every Power, with all the Latitude of our Will, and with the whole Poſſibility of our Souls; that we beſtow on him not only the higheſt degree of our Love, but every degree of it, the *Whole*? In one Word, that God be not only the principal, but the only Object of our Love. This indeed is a Sacrifice worthy of a God, when the Whole Man is offer'd up to him as a Burnt Offering: And no leſs can he be ſuppoſed to require from us by vertue of this great Law, when he bids us to love him with all our Heart, with all our Soul, and with all our Mind. In the ſame Senſe therefore as 'tis ſaid, *Thou ſhalt worſhip the Lord thy God, and him only ſhalt thou ſerve*; ſo is this great Commandment to be underſtood, as if it were ſaid,

Thou

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou desire. For Love is the true natural Worship of the Soul, and as we are to *Worship* none but God, so are we to *Love* none but God.

But to make this appear *intelligible Divinity*, we must look about for a proper Ground for it in *Philosophy*, it being necessary that we lay our Foundation as much deeper than the Common Interpreters have done, as we intend to build higher. Which leads me to the second general Part of my Undertaking; namely, to consider the Reason and Bottom upon which this great Commandment stands.

The Sense of it I have already explain'd, and made to be the same with what the *Letter* of the Text imports; namely, That our whole Affection be placed upon God, and that we love him so intirely as to love none but him. I come now to justifie this Sense, which I shall endeavour to establish upon this double Basis in general.

I. That God is the only Author or Cause of our Love.

II. That he is also the only proper Object of it.

First, I consider that God is the only Author or Cause of our Love. By Love here I understand that original Weight, Bent or Endeavour whereby the Soul of Man

Man ſtands inclined and is moved forwards to Good in general or *Happineſs*. Now that this Impreſſion is from God, and that 'tis he alone that has put this *Biaſs* into our Natures, I think demonſtrable ſeveral ways; but at preſent ſhall only conſider that this Motion of the Soul is a neceſſary Adherent to our Beings, ſuch as we were never without, and ſuch as we can never put off; ſuch as is all over invincible and irreſiſtable. The Soul of Man muſt not pretend to the leaſt degree of Liberty here (for indeed it being impoſſible that our Love to Good in general ſhould be bad, it was not fit it ſhould be free) but is altogether paſſive in this Motion, and moves no otherwiſe than as ſhe is moved. She has no more Command over this Motion than ſhe has over the Motion of the *Heart* or *Pulſe*, which ſhews it to be equally *Vital* and Natural, and of the very eſſential Make and Conſtitution of our Being. Well then, I demand, Is this natural neceſſary Motion from our *Selves* or from *God*? If from our Selves, How comes it then to paſs, that we cannot command it, or ſtop it? Had we Power to produce what we have not Power to govern? or, is it more difficult to govern than to produce? No certainly, were we the Authors of this Motion we ſhould have ſome Power over it, and be able to manage and controul it;

which

which since we cannot do, we may well conclude, that 'tis not a thing of our Production; and that though it be *in* us, yet 'tis not *of* or *from* our Selves. And whence then must it be but from God? Who else could kindle in our Natures such an unquenchable Flame? Who else could fix such a strong *Spring* in our Souls, and actuate our Beings with such a mighty Energy? And who should be the Author of what is *Natural* and Necessary in us, but he that is the Author of our *Natures?* Love is the same in the Moral and Intellectual World as Motion is in the Natural; and as we make God to be the Author of Natural Motion, so there is as much reason to make him the Author of our Love. But now if God be the only Author and Cause of our Love, has not he then the sole Right and Title to it; and has not he also a Right to it all? This may seem perhaps at first glance to be a captious and surprizing way of Arguing; but consider it well; Has not God a Right to all that he *produces?* What is it that gives him a Right to the whole World, but his Production of it? Why has God a Right to me, but because I am his Creature? Upon what Account has he a Right to all my Powers and Faculties, and to all the service of them, but because he produces them, and sustains them; because *in him we*

Lives

Live, Move, and have our Being? But now if God does as much produce my *Love* as he does my *Being*, then, Why has he not as much Right to my Love as to any other part of my Nature? And if God only has a Right to my Love, and a Right to it all, as having produced it all, then 'tis evident, that all of it ought to be fix'd upon him, and that he has great Injury and Injuſtice done him whenever any the leaſt degree of it goes beſides him. Indeed were there any part or degree of our Love which God did not produce, That we might give away from him, That we might beſtow upon a Creature; but if God be the Author of it all, if there be not one degree of our Love but what he produces, 'tis highly juſt and reaſonable that he ſhould have it all; and we cannot let the leaſt Spark of this ſacred Fire light upon the Creature without ſo far defrauding the Creator.

Eſpecially if we conſider further the Manner how, and the End for which God produces our Love. I now ſuppoſe, as a thing already proved, that all the Motion that the Soul has towards Good comes from God; but how does God move us towards Good? Whither is it that God does then direct this Motion? He himſelf indeed is the *Author* of it, but what is the *Term* of it? to what does God move us? Our corrupt

rupt Imagination may perhaps be ready here to ſuggeſt that God moves us to Good by moving us towards the *Creature*. But ſtay, Would ſuch a *Term* of this Motion be worthy of its *Cauſe*? Can God move us towards the Creature? Can he move us from himſelf? Can he act for a Creature? Can he make the Creature his End? Does not God make all things for himſelf? Does he not always act for himſelf? Is he not always his own End? Has not this the Evidence of a Firſt Principle, That God acts only for himſelf? We muſt therefore of neceſſity conclude, That as God is the Author of this Motion, ſo he is the Natural End and Term of it too; and that he moves us to Good no otherwiſe, than by moving us towards himſelf. We muſt conclude, that God is the true great *Magnet* of our Souls; that he continually draws and moves them, not from, but to himſelf, as being both *their*, and his *own* great End. We muſt conclude that God intended himſelf as the ſole Object of the Love which he produced; that he has impreſt a Motion upon our Intellectual Heart, only to incline it toward himſelf; and that as the whole Motion of our Love is from God, ſo it has no other Term than God in the Order and Inſtitution of Nature.

Well then, if the Caſe be thus, if God moves

moves us to Good by moving us towards himſelf: Is it not then a tranſgreſſing this Order and Inſtitution of Nature? Is it not an abuſe of that Motion of Love which God cauſes in us, and which he directs towards himſelf, to beſtow any part of it upon a Creature, to love any thing beſides God? Do we not then Croſs the Order of Nature, and reſiſt the Will of its great Author? Do we not then hinder his Act, and put a Bar to his Motion within us? Nay, do we not then act againſt the Conſtitution of our own Frame, and run Counter to the great Bias of our Natures? What, does he that gave us our Beings, ſhew alſo ſo great a Concern for their *Perfection*, as to impreſs upon them a continual Motion towards himſelf; and ſhall we be ſo ungrateful as well as unjuſt, as to ſtop ſhort, and take up with a Creature? We ought certainly to follow the Order, and conform to the Will of God; and ſince he has order'd the Motion of our Love to no leſs Noble an End than himſelf, 'tis evident that thither only we ought to *direct*, and thereonly to *fix* our Love.

And that we do not at all ſtrain the Senſe of this Commandment, by ſuppoſing it thus to oblige us to Love the Lord our God with *all the Heart, Soul and Mind*, in the ſtricteſt Emphaſis of the Phraſe, will yet further appear, if we examin the other general

neral ground upon which it ſtands; and conſider

Secondly, That as God is the only Author and Cauſe of our Love, ſo is he alſo the only proper Object of it. It is moſt clear and certain, that God only is to be loved, if God be the only proper Object of our Love; and 'tis as clear, that he is the only proper Object of our Love, if he only be our Good; and 'tis as clear that he only is our Good, if he only does us Good, if he only perfects and betters our Beings; and 'tis as clear that he only does ſo, if he be the only true Cauſe of all our Pleaſure, of all thoſe grateful Senſations whereof we are Conſcious, and wherewith we are affected. I ſay if he be: But here lies the Point to be debated. And 'tis a great Point indeed; for upon this Hinge the whole Weight of the preſent Theory turns, and the whole Iſſue of it will depend. Here therefore let us ſtop and fix, and withall poſſible heed and attentiveneſs enquire after the true Cauſe of our *Pleaſure*. For where ever we find that, there to be ſure we ſhall alſo find the only proper Object of our *Love*.

That in the uſe of Bodies, and in converſing with Senſible Objects, we find Pleaſure, we learn by *Experience*, but whence this Pleaſure comes, and what is its true efficient Cauſe, 'tis our *Reaſon* only that can inform us. And yet ſhe has had

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the ill Fortune to be leaſt of all conſulted in this matter. It is generally thought, that the Pleaſure we feel in the Uſe, and by the Intervention of Bodies is cauſed in us by the Bodies themſelves. That the Fire for inſtance, produces in us Senſation of Warmth, that the Sun produces in us the Senſation of Light, that the Fruits of the Earth Communicate to us the Senſations of the pleaſant Taſtes, and the like. Theſe Bodies are firſt ſuppoſed to have ſomething like theſe Senſations in themſelves, and then to produce them in us. Thus Fire is ſuppoſed to be endued with the quality of Heat in it ſelf, and then to impart this *quality* to us; to be firſt Hot in its own Nature, and then to make us ſo. This has been all along the Current unqueſtion'd Apprehenſion, not only of the Vulgar who think in haſte, and determin of things only as they appear to Senſe, but of the more inquiſitive and reaſoning part of Mankind. And though ſome of the Modern *Reformers* of Philoſophy have thought fit to reject the *former* part of the Suppoſition, *viz.* That Bodies have in themſelves ſomething anſwerable to the Senſations which we feel in the uſe of them; yet they generally retain the *Later*, *viz.* That they produce and cauſe thoſe Senſations in us, and do accordingly allow, that Fire (for inſtance) is *Eminently* and *Potentially*

tentially, though not *Formally* hot, that is, That though it has not any thing reſembling the Senſation of Heat in it ſelf, yet it has a Power to produce ſuch a Senſation in thoſe that ſhall approach it. This they not only *allow*, but *contend* for. For whereas according to the Old Diſtinction, ſome things were ſaid to be both Formally and Eminently hot too (as Fire) and ſome only eminently, (as the Sun) the Moderns have ventured to cut off the former part of the Diſtinction, and reduce all to the later, by ſuppoſing all Bodies that we call Hot, to be ſo only *Eminently* and *Potentially*, as they are productive of Heat in us. And by this they explain the *Phenomenon* of Heat in Bodies, ſuppoſing it to be nothing elſe in the Bodies themſelves, but only a Power of producing ſuch a Senſation. But then by this they mainifeſtly hold that they do produce it; and I know but of

* Mr. *Malebranche.*

* One amongſt them that thinks any *Otherwiſe*, or any *Farther*. They thought, it ſeems, they had ſufficiently reform'd from the Vulgar Philoſophy, by ſhaking off the former part of their Hypotheſis, That Bodies have in themſelves ſome inherent Quality analogous to our Senſations; ſo much they ſaw muſt be rejected. But they could not tell how to deny the later part, and do therefore hold, that Bodies

do

do produce in us ſuch and ſuch Senſations, though they have nothing of a Similar Nature with them in themſelves.

Very good. But were they determin'd to this Perſuaſion by the Moments of Reaſon? I think 'tis to be doubted whether they ever ſo much as Conſulted her in *this* part of the Queſtion. They ſeem here rather to have hearkned to the Illuſions of Senſe and Imagination, ſuggeſting to them, that becauſe ſuch Bodily impreſſions are accompanied with ſuch Senſations, therefore the later were the effect of the former. This is the only reaſon that is, or can be pretended in behalf of this Common Preſumption. But is this a Warrantable Concluſion? Does it follow, that becauſe ſuch Senſations do accompany ſuch Bodily Impreſſions, that therefore thoſe Bodily Impreſſions are the Cauſe of thoſe Senſations? Can we argue from the *Concomitancy* of one thing with another, to the *Cauſal Dependance* of one thing upon another? 'Tis certain that we cannot; and 'tis therefore as certain, that the Reaſon pretended for the Common Hypotheſis, is indeed no Reaſon at all, but a *Prejudice* rather than a *Reaſon*.

Now though it be very unworthy of a Philoſopher, and withall a very great let and intanglement to him in his Enquiry after Truth, to aſſert any one thing without

clear and full Evidence: Yet this is neither the only, nor the greateſt defect of this Concluſion. For as there is no ſufficient Reaſon for it, ſo there is plain inconteſtable Reaſon againſt it.

Had our late Improvers of Science diſregarded the importunate Calmours of Senſe and Imagination in this later point as they did in the former, and conſulted only the Reſponſes of *inward Truth*, they would have ſeen as much reaſon to reject the Notion of Bodies being able to excite Senſations in us, as to reject that of their having ſome certain *Qualities* like thoſe Senſations in themſelves. Nay, they would have ſeen, that the very ſame Reaſons that induced them to the one, ought alſo to have determin'd them to the other. For why is it that they will not allow that Bodies have in them ſomething like our Senſations, particularly that in Fire there is any ſuch thing as a Quality of Heat, anſwerable to what we call Heat in our ſelves: I ſay, Why is it that they will not allow this, but becauſe they reaſon'd with themſelves to this effect: There is nothing conceivable in Bodies but *Magnitude*, *Figure*, and *Motion?* For inſtance, there is nothing in Fire but certain Particles of Matter ſo and ſo ſized, ſo and ſo figured, and ſo and ſo moved. Examin your Idea of Fire a thouſand times over, and this

this is all you will ever be able to find in it. I ſay find *in* it: For 'tis true indeed, when you come near you find ſomething more *from* it, you find withall a Senſation of *Heat*, either pleaſing or painful according as your diſtance is. But you have no more reaſon thence to conclude, that there is ſuch a Quality as Heat, reſembling what you feel, in the Fire, than you have to conclude *Pain* to be in a *Needle* or a *Thorn*. When you approach the Fire you feel Heat, and when you prick your Hand with a Needle you feel Pain; but as you *do* not therefore fancy any ſuch thing as Pain to be in the Needle, ſo neither *ought* you to ſuppoſe any ſuch thing as Heat to be in the Fire. That indeed which makes Men more apt to do ſo in this Caſe than in the other is, becauſe the Particles of the Fire are too Minute to be diſcern'd by the Eye, and ſo Men not perceiving the *Mechanicalneſs* of its Operation, are apt to have recourſe to ſome inherent *Quality*; whereas the Thorn and Needle are of a viſible Bulk, and we ſee how they pierce and wound our Fleſh. But did Men as clearly ſee the Particles of the Fire, with their Size, Figure and Motion, and with what a Spring they are ſhot and darted forth upon us, and how like ſo many fine Needles or Launces they enter and divide the parts of our Body, they would no more

Dream of any ſuch thing as *Heat* in the *Fire*, than they do of *Pain* in a *Needle*, and would think it every whit as odd and improper to ſay, Fire is *Hot*, as to ſay a Needle is *Painful*. And though as the Caſe now ſtands, they are apt to fancy the contrary; yet 'tis plain, that this is only an Illuſion of Senſe, Reaſon in the mean while conſtantly aſſuring us, that there can be nothing in Fire but Particles of Matter of ſuch a Size and Shape, and in ſuch a degree of Motion: And withall, that we cannot aſcribe ſuch a thing as Heat to the Fire, anſwerable to that Senſation in our ſelves, without aſcribing to it alſo *Thought* and *Perception* at the ſame time, which would be of intolerable Conſequence.

Upon theſe and ſuch like Conſiderations, the Reformers of Phyloſophy, I preſume, thought it neceſſary to reject the former part of the Vulgar Hypotheſis, that Bodies have in them ſome certain Qualities anſwerable to our Senſations. And no doubt but that they reaſon'd upon clear and diſtinct Idea's. But will not the very ſame Conſiderations be of equal force to diſprove the later part too, that Bodies do *cauſe* and *produce* Senſations in us? For if there be nothing in Bodies but *Motion* and *Figure*, if they are capable of no other Modification, then whatever they do, they muſt do it by

by the Motion, and by the Figure of their Parts; there being nothing beſides ſuppoſed to be in them. If therefore they cauſe our Senſations, 'tis by their Figure and their Motion that they muſt do it. But can Motion or Figure produce a Senſation, a Sentiment of the Mind, a *Thought*? 'Tis hard, extreme hard, to conceive how one Motion ſhould beget another. But can it produce an Effect more Noble and Excellent, and of an Order ſo very much higher than it ſelf? Can it produce a Thought? Is there any Proportion between ſuch a Cauſe and ſuch an Effect; between Motion and Thinking, between an Affection of a Body, and a Sentiment of the Soul? Or is there any proportion between ſuch a *particular* Motion, and ſuch a *particular* Senſation; between that Motion, ſuppoſe, that is follow'd with Pleaſure, and Pleaſure; or between that Motion which is follow'd with Pain, and Pain? is that Motion which *de facto* is accompanied with Pleaſure, more apt of its ſelf and in its own Nature, to produce that Senſation rather than Pain? Or may not that very Motion which is *de facto* follow'd with Pleaſure, be as well the Occaſion of Pain for any Proportion, Affinity, or Natural Connexion that is in the things themſelves? 'Tis moſt certain that it may. For Pleaſure and

Pain are Senſations of a wholly different, nay contrary kind. They differ as much as any two things can do. They differ not only Eſſentially, but as Contraries, as extreme Oppoſites. And they do almoſt make their *Subjects* do ſo, the Soul that is in Pleaſure differing almoſt *Specifically* from her ſelf when ſhe is in Pain. But now there is not the like difference between the reſpective Motions ſuppoſed to produce them; They differ only Accidentally and Gradually. That Motion of the Fire which occaſions Pleaſure, differs only in Degree from that which occaſions Pain. Whence it is evident, that theſe Cauſes are not in themſelves equivalent to their Effects, nor have any Natural Relation to them, but are indifferent to either, as being diſproportionate to both. That the ſame Motion that is now attended with Pleaſure, might as well (for any particularity in the thing it ſelf) be attended with Pain, there being as great diſproportion between theſe particular Motions and their particular Senſations, as between Motion and Senſation in general.

What is here ſaid of *Motion*, is as applicable to *Figure*; and ſince theſe are the only two Modifications Body is capable of, and theſe hold no proportion with our Senſations, 'tis plain that our Senſations ought not, cannot be aſcribed to Bodies as their

proper

proper Efficient Cauſes. The ſum of the Argument reſolves into this. There is nothing in Bodies but Figure and Motion, if therefore Bodies do produce or cauſe our Senſations, they muſt do it by Figure and Motion. But they cannot do it by Figure and Motion; therefore Bodies cannot produce our Senſations.

And whereas it is again further concluded, that Bodies have not in themſelves any Quality reſembling the Senſations which we feel at their Preſence, becauſe this would oblige us to allow them capable of *Thought*; which in Reaſon we cannot do: Is not the very ſame Conſideration of equal force to prove alſo, that they do not *produce* our Senſations? Does not the ſame Want and Incapacity of Thought infer the one as well as the other? Bodies have no Thought, therefore they *have* no Senſations; Bodies have no Thought, therefore they *produce* none: Is not the laſt Conſequence as good as the firſt? Without allqueſtion it is. For how can a Thoughtleſs Principle produce a Thought? That is, how can the Effect be above the Order of its Cauſe? If it may, then any thing may produce any thing, and any thing may follow from any thing, which would overturn all the Order both of *Science* and of *Nature*.

And

And if further, it be reckon'd ſuch an Abſurdity that *Matter* ſhould *Think* (as it is by thoſe who to avoid this inconvenience, deny that there is any thing in Bodies reſembling our Senſations) then is it not a much greater abſurdity to ſuppoſe it capable of *producing* Thought? And are not thoſe very inconſiſtent with their own Principles, who ſcruple to allow to Bodies a Capacity of Thinking, and upon that ground reject the Old Doctrin of *Qualities*, as they ſignifie ſomething in Bodies Correſponding to our Senſations; and yet at the ſame time will allow them a Power of producing that Thought in us which they think they are not capable of in themſelves? Is not this a very great inconſiſtency, eſpecially for Men of Principles and Demonſtration to be guilty of? For certainly it is a great deal more to be able to *produce* Thought, than to be meerly *capable* of it. I my ſelf am capable of Thought, but I do not find I have a Power to produce it, not ſo much as in my ſelf, much leſs in another, If therefore we deny Matter what is Leſs, we ought to be the more Cautious how we allow it what is Greater; and if it be ſuch an Abſurdity that Bodies ſhould be capable of Thought, then much more abſurd is it, that they ſhould have a Power to produce it.

And

And thus have I ſhewn that the very ſame Reaſons which prove that Bodies have not any Qualities in them like our Senſations, do alſo prove that they do neither produce Senſations in us, and conſequently that our Modern Philoſophers who upon thoſe Grounds rejected the former part, ought upon the very ſame Grounds to have rejected the latter too. And as they ought, ſo they eaſily might. They had the right Thread in their Hands, but 'twas their Unhappineſs to let it go, and not to purſue the Clue of their own Reaſonings.

What I have hitherto argued from the *Principles* upon which thoſe Men built their Concluſion, may alſo be as well argued from the *Concluſion* it ſelf built upon thoſe Principles. Their Concluſion is, that Bodies have not in themſelves any ſuch inherent Qualities as Correſpond to our Senſations. Well then, if they have not any thing like Senſation in themſelves, how ſhall they be able to produce them in us? Can they communicate what they are not poſſeſt of? Can they cauſe Senſations in us which they have not, which they feel not, which they know not, and which they cannot ever cauſe in themſelves? They themſelves are here ſuppoſed utterly void and uncapable of all Senſation; but if they can produce it in us, why may they not be as well able to

produce

produce it in themſelves? But this muſt not be; the *Concluſion* is, that they have not any thing like thoſe Senſations in themſelves; whence I may juſtly infer, that they are as little capable of producing them in us.

But beſides, Can Bodies act upon Spirits? ſo indeed they muſt do, if it be true that they produce our Senſations, ſince the Soul is the only proper Subject of all Perception. But is this poſſible? Is not Spirit ſuppoſed to *penetrate* Body? Well, if ſo, then it may coexiſt with it in the ſame determinate point of Space; if ſo, then it will not reſiſt it, and if ſo, then it will not be capable of ſuffering by it, or receiving any impreſſion from it, it being impoſſible that Bodies ſhould act upon that which does not reſiſt their Action. The leſs the reſiſtance is, the leſs always is the Impreſſion (as appears from that little force the ſtrongeſt Wind has upon a Body of a *Conical* Figure) and conſequently where there is no reſiſtance at all, there can be no Impreſſion at all. And therefore ſince Spirits make no reſiſtance againſt Bodies, it is not poſſible that Bodies ſhould have any Action, or make any Impreſſion upon Spirits. The moſt that can be allow'd to Bodies, is to be able to act upon other Bodies, either by moving all their parts at once out of their place, or by changing the Order

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and Situation of the Parts among themſelves; but how they ſhould be capable of acting upon Spirits, upon a ſort of Beings that make no reſiſtance againſt them, is what I can neither Conceive, or think Conceivable.

Suppoſe I ſhould fling a Stone at a Spirit, ſhould I hurt it, do you think? No you'l ſay, not a *mere* Spirit; but ſhould that Spirit be in a *Body*, you would hurt it then. But pray why ſo? What's the meaning of this? Why if it were in a Body? If the Stone cannot hurt it when there is nothing that interpoſes, it will be leſs able to do ſo when there is ſo thick a Wall between. But if it be the Stone that properly hurts it when 'tis in the Body, then why can it not as well do it when 'tis out of the Body? It ſhould by right be better able then, as I can more eaſily wound a Naked Man, than a Man Clad in Armour. But this plainly diſcovers the Bottom of the Myſtery; this clearly ſhews, that 'tis not the Stone that ſtrictly and properly ſpeaking, *Cauſes* the Senſation of Pain in the Spirit (for then it would be as well, nay better able to hurt a *ſeparate* Spirit than an *imbody'd* one) but that all that the Stone truly does is only to adminiſter the *Occaſion* of this Senſation to the Spirit by what it impreſſes upon its Body, but that ſome other Being is the true Efficient *Cauſe* of it; of which further by and by.

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In the mean while I further consider that if Bodies should be allow'd to be the proper Causes of our Sensations, of that Pleasure and that Pain which we feel at their Presence and in their Use, then it would be in the power of Bodies to make us happy or miserable, to reward or punish us, to perfect or to deteriorate our Condition; our well or ill being would depend upon them; consequently they would be *above* us, so far above us as to be the true and proper Good, and the true and proper Evil of Man, and so would justly deserve not only our Love and our Fear, our Gratitude and our Esteem, but even our very Devotion and Veneration. We ought then to ascribe our Good to the Bodies that surround us as well as to our *Own*, pay a Tribute of Praise to the Material World, and sing a *Te Deum* to the Creation. We ought then to worship the Sun for giving us Light, the Fire, for affording us Heat, the Fruits of the Earth for delighting us with their pleasing Tasts, and what not? There would be no part of the Material World so vile and mean (not even the very Earth we tread upon) but what upon this Supposition would be above our selves, and upon which we should depend for our Happiness and our Misery, and would therefore challenge a share in our Religious Acknowledgments. These are most intolerable Consequences,

but

but ſuch as do inevitably follow upon the Suppoſition of making Bodies the Cauſes of thoſe Senſations which accompany the Preſence and Uſe of them, and therefore I think it neceſſary to deny (however I may incounter the Prejudice of Imagination in ſo doing) that they are the true and proper Cauſes of thoſe Senſations.

But to ſtrike a little more light yet into this Matter, let us conſider the Operation of ſome particular Body. I finding my ſelf cold, draw near to the *Fire*, that is, to a Body conſiſting of a great Number of very ſmall Minute Particles, of ſharp-pointed Figures, variouſly agitated, and in a moſt rapid and impetuous Motion. Upon my Approach I find my troubleſom Senſation of Cold, to abate and by degrees to be exchanged for a more grateful one, which we call Heat. This is the Effect that I experiment upon my coming near the Fire. But pray what does the Fire do to me? Why to ſpeak properly it does nothing to *me*, that is, to my *Spirit*. But what is it that it does to my *Body*? Why it variouſly moves and agitates the Parts of it, and if near enough will divide and ſeparate one Part from another, and ſo diſſolve my Bodily Frame. This Fire does, and this is *all* it does, or can do directly and properly as an *Efficient Cauſe*. Well, but though this be all that Fire *does*, yet

yet this is not all that is *done*, I feel ſomething more at my Approach to it. Yes, you'l ſay I feel the Impreſſion which the Fire makes upon my Body. No, that's your miſtake, I do not feel the *Impreſſion* made upon my Body (for how can I feel what is done to another thing?) but I feel a certain *Senſation* in my Soul either of Pleaſure or Pain, between which and that Bodily Impreſſion there is no manner of Similitude or Proportion. The *Senſation* is that which I *feel*. But that is not what the *Fire does*, whoſe whole Efficiency being only Motion and Figure can have Effect no further than upon my Body. But the Senſation, which I feel is not in my Body, but in my Soul, and conſequently is not of the Fire's producing, but muſt be aſcribed to ſome other Cauſe. In ſhort, that which moves the Parts of my Body is one thing, and that which affects my Soul with Pleaſure or Pain is another; the Fire may do the *Former*, but it cannot do the *Later*.

But though the Fire cannot directly and immediately operate upon the Soul ſo as to affect it with any Senſation, yet may it not mediately and indirectly by Virtue of that *Union* that is between *Soul* and *Body*? So indeed it is commonly thought, and many a Learned Man has ſate down with this anſwer as with a very full and ſatisfactory Account

count of the Buſineſs. There is they ſay a very cloſe Tie and Union between the Soul and Body, and by this means Fire comes to operate upon the Soul, and to give it Pleaſure or Pain, and all by Virtue of this Union. But for Fire to operate upon the Soul by reaſon of the *Union* between that and the Body is ſuch a looſe indeterminate way of ſpeaking, that as it clears nothing, ſo 'tis neither capable of having any Anſwer applied to it, till it be drawn out of its Ambiguity, and reduced to ſome certain Meaning. I ſuppoſe therefore that they who offer this Account, if they intend any thing certain and diſtinct by it, muſt mean one of theſe Three things.

Either that the Fire by the Motion which it imparts to my Body makes it to act upon my Soul.

Or, that there is ſuch a mutual Connexion or *Natural Sympathy* between theſe two Subſtances Soul and Body, that what is done to the Body will be felt by the Soul.

Or laſtly, that there is ſuch a *Poſitive* Law or Order eſtabliſh'd between them by the Author of Nature, that ſuch Impreſſions made upon the Body ſhall be ordinarily followed by ſuch Senſations in the Soul.

As for the firſt of theſe ways which ſuppoſes the Fire by the Motion which it communicates to my Body to make my *Body* to

act upon my Soul, this will reſolve into an immediate Action of Body upon Spirit, which has been confuted already. For though the Fire be here ſuppoſed to act *mediately*, yet my Body is ſuppoſed to act *immediately* upon my Soul. But now it is no more poſſible that my Body ſhould act upon my Soul, than that any *other* Body ſhould. And the ſame Reaſons that prove it impoſſible that Body in general ſhould be able to act upon Spirit, prove it alſo impoſſible that any particular Bodies ſhould.

As to the Second, which ſuppoſes ſuch a natural connexion and ſympathy between theſe Two Subſtances Soul and Body, that what is done to the Body will be felt by the Soul, I deny that there is or can be any ſuch connexion in the nature of the things themſelves; for (not to argue at preſent from the vaſt diſproportion between Body and Spirit) are not the Soul and Body *Two diſtinct* Subſtances? And can any Two things that are really diſtinct one from the other, be ſo united or connected together in their own natures, that an impreſſion made upon the one, ſhall by the ſame act affect the other? Is there any ſuch natural connexion between Body and Body, or Spirit and Spirit? much leſs then between *Body* and *Spirit*. Do the Figures which

are

are cut upon the Bark of a Tree wound my Body? Or does the pain or grief which another Soul endures by way of natural connexion, affect mine? Is *another's* Pain *mine*? I may indeed make it my own in a moral ſenſe, by intereſſing my ſelf in it, but then 'tis not another's Pain that I indure (unleſs figuratively ſpeaking) but my own. There is no natural ſympathy between my Spirit and any other Spirit in the World, nor am I concerned in any change that is wrought in it, whether for Happineſs or Miſery, any further than I pleaſe to concern my ſelf. Much leſs then can any Impreſſion made upon my Body by way of *Natural Sympathy*, affect my Soul. Yes, but you'l ſay they are ſo intimately *united*, that the one partakes in the other's Sufferings. But if by *united*, you mean that there is any ſuch Connexion or Dependance between them in the Nature of the things themſelves, you beg the thing in Queſtion, and which I ſhall never grant, *viz.* That Bodies and Spirits (or indeed any two Subſtances) are or can be ſo united, that one ſhould feel the Impreſſion made upon the other. But beſides, that which I feel is not the *Impreſſion* made upon my Body (as was obſerv'd before) but a *Senſation*, whether of Pleaſure or of Pain; between which and the Impreſſion, there is not the leaſt ſhadow of

likeneſs or proportion. 'Tis common indeed to ſay, *we feel ſuch a Blow*, or *we feel ſuch a Wound*, but this muſt not be allow'd but in a popular Latitude; for to ſpeak ſtrictly and Philoſophically, 'tis not the Blow that we feel, but *Pain*; which being a Senſation of the Soul, is diſtinct from the Impreſſion made upon the Body; and conſequently the Soul cannot be ſaid to feel what is done to the Body, (for it feels ſomething elſe:) Nor can what is done to the Body, be the Cauſe of what the Soul feels.

By this it ſufficiently appears, that the Fire cannot be truly ſaid to operate upon the Soul by the *Mediation* of the Body in either of the two *former* ways; If then they will have the Fire to operate upon the Soul by virtue of its Union with the Body, they muſt be ſuppoſed to intend it in the third and laſt ſenſe of the expreſſion; namely, that there is ſuch a *poſitive* Law or Order eſtabliſh'd between them by the Author of Nature, that ſuch Impreſſions made upon the Body, ſhall be follow'd by ſuch Senſations in the Soul: Now I acknowledg, that this is a right Notion of the Union that is between Soul and Body, as reſolving it not into a *Natural*, but a *Poſitive* Connexion and Dependance, it being impoſſible that two really diſtinct Subſtances, ſuch as Body and Soul are, ſhould be united together any otherwiſe.

But

But then I deny that the Fire can be truly ſaid to act upon the Soul by virtue of ſuch an Union as this. And to ſay that it does, is in effect to give up the Cauſe, by granting the very thing hitherto contended for. To ſay that the Fire *thus* acts upon the Soul is implicitly to confeſs, that it does not truly act upon it at all, and to lead us directly to the proper Cauſe that *does*. For when you ſay that the Fire cauſes ſuch a Senſation in the Soul by reaſon of that *Law*, that ſuch Senſations ſhall follow ſuch Impreſſions, (for this is what you are now ſuppoſed to underſtand by the *Union* of Soul and Body) 'tis plain that you aſcribe the effect, not to the *Fire*, but to that *Law*, whatever it be. For if ſuch a Senſation did naturally and directly follow ſuch an Impreſſion of the Fire as an Effect follows its proper Cauſe, then what need of any *Law* or *Order* to be eſtabliſh'd, that ſuch a Senſation ſhould follow ſuch an Impreſſion? 'Tis plain therefore, that the Senſation produced in the Soul at the Impreſſion of the Fire, is to be reſolved into this *Law* as its proper Cauſe, and can depend upon the Impreſſion no otherwiſe, than as an *Occaſion*, or a *Condition* determining the Efficiency of this Law. The Senſation indeed follows ſuch an Impreſſion, but becauſe it only *therefore* follows it, becauſe

of that Law and Order eſtabliſh'd that it ſhould; 'tis the *Law*, not the *impreſſion* of the Fire, that is the true Cauſe of the Senſation.

Well, but what is this *Law*? It muſt be ſomething that executes it ſelf, otherwiſe how ſhall it be ſecure of its effect? And what can that be, but the Will of God; and what is the Will of God, but God; who does all things by his Will, that is, by himſelf? So then according to this account 'tis *God* that is the true Efficient Cauſe of that Senſation, either of Pleaſure or Pain which we feel at the impreſſion of the Fire; and the Fire it ſelf is ſo far from operating (as was ſuppoſed) upon the Soul by the *Mediation* of the *Body*, that 'tis God that acts upon the Soul by the *Mediation* of the *Fire*, which only ſerves as a Condition or Occaſion to determin the act of God, the only true and proper Cauſe.

Is then the Fire to be conſider'd only as bearing the part of a *Condition*, or an *Occaſion* to the Firſt Cauſe, does it *produce* or *effect* nothing? Yes, it may conſider'd as a *Cauſe* too, with reſpect to the impreſſion that is made upon the *Body*; but as to the Senſation which upon that impreſſion ariſes in the *Soul*, we can allow it to be no more than a Condition or Occaſion. The ſum is, there are three things of diſtinct Conſi-

deration

deration relating to the Fire, the Motion that is in the Fire it ſelf, the Impreſſion made upon my Body by that Motion, and the Senſation that follows in the Soul upon that Impreſſion. As to the Motion that is in the Fire it ſelf, therein conſiſts its proper Power, Force and Activity: As to the Impreſſion made upon my Body, that is the effect which it works by that Power; but as to the Senſation which follows in my Soul upon that Impreſſion, this does no way depend upon the Impreſſion of the Fire as its Efficient Cauſe, but is raiſed or produced in me by the Author of my Nature, by the occaſion of that Impreſſion, according to that general Law and Order he has eſtabliſh'd, that ſuch certain Senſations ſhould follow upon ſuch certain Impreſſions, as in the ſequel I ſhall more directly ſhew.

I have hitherto ſhewn, both by General and by Particular Conſiderations, that *Bodies* are not the true proper Cauſes of our Senſations, of that Pleaſure and that Pain, which by their intervention we feel, and which therefore they *ſeem*, and are generally *thought* to produce. And I have once or twice by way of Anticipation, glanc'd a little at the *True* Cauſe of all our Senſations, which I have intimated to proceed from the Author of our Natures. But

this being not enough to Convince, I ſhall now attempt to offer ſome Rational Proof for the truth of what I have already but only *intimated* and *propoſed*.

It will go a great way towards the Proof of this, that Bodies are not the true Cauſes of our Senſations, which is the reaſon that I have ſo largely and ſo nicely diſcours'd that Point. For they are the things to which Men are moſt apt to aſcribe them, and that becauſe they are the only things they ſee and have before them; and becauſe withall, 'tis upon their Impreſſion that our Senſations follow, whereupon by a kind of *Senſible Logick*, they are led to conclude that what they feel is really cauſed by them. And this hinders them from inquiring any *further* or any *higher*. But now were this Prejudice of Senſe once removed, could Men once get over this Difficulty that their Senſations are not cauſed by Bodies, there would not be much Difficulty to perſuade them that they are cauſed by *God*. And therefore having already given in ſuch clear and full Evidence that Bodies do not cauſe our Senſations, I think the greateſt part of the Work is done, and that we may now preſume as a thing that will not be long a granting us, that God is the true and proper Cauſe of them.

But

But for a more Poſitive and particular Proof, I further conſider, that ſince *Body* is not the Cauſe of our Senſations, the Cauſe of them muſt of neceſſity be *Spirit*, all that *is* being included under one of theſe two. Well, if Spirit, the Competition will be very narrow, for then it muſt be either our own Spirit, or ſome Angel, or Demon, or God. Not our own Spirit. For if my own Spirit were the Cauſe of thoſe Senſations which I feel at the Impreſſions which other Bodies make upon mine, it would then be in my Power to have thoſe Senſations as well without the Impreſſions of Bodies as with them. I might then have the Senſation of Light without the Impreſſion of the Sun, and the Senſation of Heat without Fire, and the Senſation of ſweet Odours and Taſts without the Mediation of odorifick or ſapid Bodies. For ſince theſe Bodies are ſuppoſed according to the Principles before laid down not to have any Concurrence by way of *Efficiency* in the Production of thoſe Senſations, but only to ſerve as poſitive Conditions to determin the Action of that Cauſe (whatever it is which does produce them) certainly it muſt be in the Power of that Cauſe to produce thoſe Senſations without any ſuch bodily Impreſſions, nay, though there were no ſuch thing as Body in being.

As

As he that made the Waters of *Marah* ſweet by throwing in of a Tree, might if he had ſo pleas'd, as well have made them ſweet without it. And conſequently were I my ſelf *that* Cauſe, what ſhould hinder me from raiſing the Senſations I now feel as well *without* as *with* thoſe Impreſſions to which they are ordinarily annexed? But not finding in my ſelf ſuch a Power, I may reaſonably conclude that my Soul is not the Author of her own Senſations, but that ſhe is altogether *Paſſive* in them, and depends for the Production of them upon ſome other Cauſe.

And beſides, if I my ſelf were the Author of my own Senſations, then ſince I naturally and neceſſarily love *Pleaſure*; and as naturally and neceſſarily hate *Pain*, I ſhould never produce in my ſelf the Senſation of Pain, but always the Senſation of Pleaſure. And ſo would every one elſe in the World beſides, they would be always in Pleaſure and never in Pain, and then we ſhould have a merry World indeed. But this is not our Caſe, we feel Pain as well as Pleaſure, and we feel it always againſt our Wills, which is a plain Argument that what we feel in our ſelves is not produced by our ſelves; but that we are in intire Subjection and dependance upon ſome other Being, in whoſe Power it is to make us Happy or Miſerable. Well

Well then, if it be not our own Spirit that is the Cauſe of our Senſations, the whole Diſpute will lie between ſome Angel, or Demon, or God. But this Competition will ſoon be ended, by conſidering the Qualification that will be requiſite in that Cauſe which ſhall produce ſuch an Effect as this. Beſides that exact and throughly comprehenſive Knowledg that ſuch a Being muſt have of our Natures, of our whole Animal and Intellectual Frame, and that Effectual Power he muſt alſo have to work upon them, which we can hardly aſcribe to any other Being than him that made us, who ſeems only fitted both to underſtand and order his own Workmanſhip, I ſay beſides this, he muſt alſo be ſuppoſed to know the very critical *Moment* when ſuch and ſuch Bodies make Impreſſion upon ours, and he muſt alſo know critically the *Degree* of that Impreſſion, and he muſt alſo know exactly the very inſtant when the Impreſſion *ceaſes*. He muſt know the Moment of the Impreſſion, that he may know when to produce the Senſation. He muſt know the Degree of the Impreſſion, that he may know how to proportion the Senſation. And he muſt know exactly the Moment when the Impreſſion ceaſes, that he may know when to ſtop and ſuſpend his Operation, that ſo he may not

continue

continue the Senſation after the Impreſſion is over. As for Example, that Being whoever he is that produces in me the Senſation of Heat as often as I draw near the Fire, muſt be ſuppoſed to know exactly when I do ſo, that he may know how to *time* that Senſation, and he muſt know the critical Degree of the Fire's Impreſſion, that he may know how to *temper* and *proportion* that Senſation, that he may not *burn* me when by the Impreſſion he ſhould only *warm* me, and he muſt alſo know the very Inſtant when I go from the Fire, that he may know when to remove the Senſation by ceaſing to act upon my Soul. All this that Being who cauſes our Senſations muſt be ſuppoſed to know, and that too exactly and critically, and that too not only here or there, in this or that particular Place, but all the World over, among that vaſt Number of Rational Creatures, that are in it, and who all partake of the ſame Senſations by the like Impreſſions. But now what Being can we ſuppoſe capable of ſuch a Province as this, but a Being of infinite Underſtanding and Power, one that need not go abroad for his Intelligence, but ſees all things immediately in himſelf, and produces all things by the immediate Efficacy of his Will?

We may therefore and muſt conclude, that 'tis *God* and God only that acts in us,

and

and is the true and proper Cauſe of all our Senſations, of that Pleaſure and that Pain which we feel by the Mediation of the Corporeal and Senſible World. That in the various Rencounter of Bodies knocking and juſtling one againſt another the only Part of us that is acted upon, is our *Body*: and though our Spirit ſuffer by that Occaſion, yet that 'tis God only that truly acts upon it, and makes it feel whatever it feels. That the moſt that Bodies can pretend to is only to be the *Cauſes* of the *Impreſſion* that is made upon our Bodies, and *Occaſions* of thoſe *Sentiments* that ſpring up in our Souls. In fine, that Bodies neither have any thing in them reſembling our Senſations, nor any Power to produce them in us, but that 'tis God that produces them by Bodies, who acts continually both in and by his Works. So then 'tis not the Sun that enlightens us, but God by the Sun. 'Tis not the Fire that gives us Heat, but God by the Fire. 'Tis not the moſt delicate Fruit, or the richeſt Perfume, that delights either our Taſt or our Smell, but 'tis God alone that raiſes Pleaſure in us by the Occaſion of theſe Bodies. The whole matter of the Creation though in continual Motion, is yet as to us, that is, to our Spirits, an idle, dead, unactive thing, and that of it ſelf ſignifies no more to the Production of our ſeveral Senſations,

ſations, than a company of odd Figures or ſenſleſs Characters do to the Cure of an *Ague*. The Sun enlightens us, and Fire warms us, juſt as thoſe Figures *cure* us, and no otherwiſe. They are Poſitive Conditions, and that's all; but tis God alone that is the true Efficient Cauſe.

This perhaps will be call'd *Perſuading Men out of their Senſes*. It may be ſo, but what then? Men muſt oftentimes be perſuaded out of their *Senſes* before they can be perſuaded into *Senſe*. The Prejudice of the Senſes is of all others the moſt obſtinate and cleaving, 'tis what we firſt take up, and laſt put off. And I am very apprehenſive how ſtrong this great Prejudice lies againſt the whole Argument of this Diſcourſe; but the Comfort is that it lies as ſtrong againſt *Truth* too, which we ſeldom diſcover when we liſten to the Suggeſtions of our Senſes, and as ſeldom miſs of when we do not. I ſhall not therefore think it an *Objection* though never ſo many ſenſible Prejudices were muſter'd up againſt the preſent Theory, ſo long as I have clear and evident *Reaſon* to conclude for the Truth of it, which is the only Oracle we are to conſult, and whoſe Anſwers we are to regard.

Well then, we have now at length found out the true Cauſe of all our *Pleaſure*, and in

in that the only proper Object of our *Love*. And certainly if ever Philoſophy were a Hand-Maid to Divinity, it is now, as furniſhing us with a certain Ground for the moſt ſublime and noble Concluſion in the World, the full, perfect and intire Love of God, which now appears to be founded upon Principles, and to be demonſtrable in a clear and diſtinct Order of Reaſoning. For if God be the only true Cauſe that acts upon our Spirits, and produces our Pleaſure, then he only does us good, he only perfects our Being and makes us happy; and if he only does us good, then he only is our good; and if he only is our good, then he only is lovely, or the proper Object of our Love; and if he only is lovely, then 'tis plain that we ought to love none but him, and him intirely. Or to argue backwards, we are to love nothing but what is lovely; nothing is lovely but what is our good; nothing is our Good, but what does us good; nothing does us good but what cauſes Pleaſure in us; nothing cauſes Pleaſure in us but God; therefore we are to love nothing but God. I ſay nothing but God, for he is the only lovely Object, and he is infinitely ſo. Nothing but God, for he only is our Good. Nothing but God, for he only does us good and makes us happy. Nothing but God, for he only is the Author of all our Pleaſure;

and

and in him we not only live, move and have our Being, but have alſo all the Joy and Comfort of our Being. Whatever Degree of Good we have receiv'd, we have receiv'd it of him; whatever we enjoy, we enjoy it in him; and whatever we expect, we expect it from him, with whom is the *Well of Life*, Pſal. 36. 9. and in whoſe Light we hope to ſee Light; and therefore we are to love none but him, and him with the whole Heart, Soul and Mind, with the full weight of our Deſire, with all the Activity of our Love.

As we cannot love *beyond* God, ſo we ought not to love *ſhort* of him. We ought not to love any *Creature*, as having not one Degree of Love but what is due to the Creator. Neither *Body* nor *Spirit* ought to be his *Rivals* in our Love, and then are they to be reckon'd as ſuch, not only when we love them *above* God, but even when we love them *with* him. For indeed we ought not to love them at all, they are not at all Lovely, and have therefore no right nor title to the leaſt degree of our Love. No, it is all Gods *Peculiar*, and whatever ſhare of it we beſtow upon them, it is ſo much Fire ſtoll'n from God's Altar, and our Love is *Sacrilegious*.

Indeed were Creatures at all Lovely, were they in any ſenſe our Good, were they able

able to do us any, were they the Cauſes of our Happineſs in any Meaſure, could they give us ſo much as one grateful Senſation, though it were but that little contemptible Pleaſure of a ſweet Smell, there would be then ſome portion of our Love due to them. But ſince there is nothing of all this in them, ſince they Communicate to me no Good, nor are any more able to pleaſe a Faculty than to Create it, what pretence have they to the leaſt intereſt in my Love? 'Tis plain, that they have none; and as plain, that I ought not to beſtow any part of my Love upon them, but to reſerve it all for my God, who has all thoſe Qualifications for it which they want, and whom therefore I cannot love as I ought, unleſs I thus love him with my whole Heart, Soul and Mind.

Were God only our *Summum Bonum*; Were he only our *Chief*, and not our *Only* Good (as 'tis commonly repreſented) he could then juſtly pretend to no more than our Chief Love; and we ſhould ſufficiently diſcharge our Devoirs to him by loving him *beſt* and *moſt*, by aſſigning him the principal Room in our Hearts. But he need not be the only Gueſt there; we might innocently entertain Creatures along with him, being upon this ſuppoſition only obliged to allow him the *Precedency*. But alas this is not enough, this will not ſerve in caſe God

be our *Only Good*, as we have clearly prov-ed that he is; and as we are plainly told that he is, in our Saviour's Answer to him that call'd him Good Master, *Why callest thou me good, there is none good but one, that is God*, Mar. 10. 18. Interpreters have been strangely put to't to accommodate this Text with a convenient Gloss, to define in what sense this is to be taken, *That there is none good but God.* One will have it, *None* Originally *good but God.* Another, *None* Supremely *good but God.* And a Third, *None* Perfectly *good but God.* And a Fourth, *None* Infinitely *good but God.* But 'tis plain, that these all shoot below the Mark. The Text says a great deal more than any, or all of this amounts to; it says absolutely and indefinitely, without any Limitation, *That there is none good but God*: Or, *That God is the* Only good. And this agrees ex-actly with the Hypothesis now laid down and proved, which will not only *bear*, but *require* this literal sense of the Words. For by this it appears, that in the strictest sense, *There is none good but God*, because there is none but he that acts in us, and is the true Cause of all the Pleasure which we do, or can ever enjoy. It all flows, not only from his *Bounty*, but from his very *Operation*; and is not only his *Gift*, but his *Production*; Which certainly is ground enough to ascribe

to

to him the Title of *the only Good.* Other things indeed may be ſaid to be good in *themſelves* after a Metaphyſical way of ſpeaking, in the ſame ſenſe as God is ſaid to have pronounc'd all things good that he had made, that is *Metaphyſically*, as having all that was requiſite to the Integrity and Perfection of their Natural Beings, according to ſuch a Rank or Order in the Creation. In this ſenſe indeed the Creatures are good; for God can make nothing but what is ſo: But they are not *our* good, they are not good to us, becauſe they do us none, as not being able to affect us with ſo much as one pleaſing Sentiment, to add ſo much as one real degree of Happineſs to our Being. No, God is the true Author and Cauſe of it all; 'tis he that *puts gladneſs into our Hearts*, Pſal. 4. 7. and diffuſes his Divine Sweetneſs throughout our Souls; and therefore he only is our Good, and he only ought to be the Object of all our Love. As for Creatures, they are no more our *Goods* than they are our *Gods*; and we may as well *Worſhip* them as *Love* them.

We are then to withdraw our Love from the whole Creation (which we may do without any injuſtice) and fix it all upon the great Author of it. That love of ours which runs out into ſo many little Streams, and is diſpers'd among ſo many

Objects in the Viſible World we are to collect together, and caſt into one great Channel, and let it all flow in one full Tide towards God. We are to trace out with diligence all the private ways of this wandring Paſſion, fetch in every ſtragling Affection, and not ſuffer the leaſt weight of our Love to reſt upon a Creature. No, we are to ſummon every Creature to come in and give up that Portion of our Love which it has ſo long uſurp'd, but could never deſerve; and when once our Heart is free of them, we are wholly to devote it to God, whom we are to make the Sole Proprietor of our Love, which we are no longer to look upon as *Common*, but as Sacred Fire, which muſt be wholly appropriated to the *Altar*.

And that we ought to be thus rooted and grounded in Divine Love; and that there is ſuch a Breadth, Length, Depth and Height in it, that we have not either laid our Foundation too deep, or raiſed our Structure too high, will appear by many places of Scripture (beſides that in the Text) injoyning our Love to God according to the ſame amplitude and unmeaſurable Meaſure. Such are all thoſe Divine Teſtimonies as import a not loving or hating of God, when any portion of our Love is beſtow'd upon the Creature. To which purpoſe

poſe is that Speech of our Saviour, who was the beſt Teacher, and the beſt Patern of Divine Love, Matt. 6. 24. *No man can ſerve two maſters, for either he will hate the one, and love the other or elſe he will hold to the one and deſpiſe the other. Ye cannot ſerve God and Mammon.* Here we are plainly told, that we cannot divide between God and the Creature; but that the adhering to the one is the rejecting of the other. And the reaſon is, not only becauſe our Natural Faculties and Capacities are too Narrow and Scanty to be employ'd upon two ſuch vaſtly different Objects; but alſo becauſe we cannot love either of them but upon ſuch a *Principle* as muſt utterly exclude the love of the other. For we muſt not love any thing but what is our true Good, what can both deſerve and reward our Love. And there can be but one thing that is ſo. It muſt be either God or the Creature. If then the Creature be our Good, let us love that and that only, that and not God; but if God be our true Good (as moſt certainly he is) then let us love God and God only, God and not the Creature. For 'tis a moſt inconſiſtent and impracticable thing to talk of carving out our Love between both, *Ye cannot ſerve God and Mammon.*

To the ſame purpoſe, but ſomewhat more expreſly, is that admonition of St.

John, Love not the World, neither the things that are in the World. If any Man love the World, the Love of the Father is not in him. 1 John 2. 15. Here you have again all Love of the Creature expresly forbidden, as altogether inconsistent with the Love of God. What can be more full and plain, Love not the World, nor the things of the World? I know that according to the Common Glos this is meant of the *immoderate* Love of the World, as if St. *John* had said, Love not the World *immoderately* or to excess. But this is only for want of Principles upon which to raise an higher Sense. 'Tis plain that the Words import a great deal more, namely, that we are not to love the World at all, that all Love of it is immoderate. And by the former Measures it appears, how and why it is so.

Hence it is that St. *James* calls such as love the World, and yet at the same time, pretend to be Lovers of God, *Adulterers* and *Adulteresses*. For after he had spoken of Concupiscence (which is nothing else but the Love of the Creature) as the Seed and Principle of all Wars and Contentions, he thus bespeaks them that were held and possess'd by it, *Ye Adulterers and Adulteresses, know ye not that the Friendship of the World is Enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a Friend of the World is the Enemy*

of

of God, Jam. 4. 4. It ſeems that in St. *James*'s Account our Heart is ſo much God's Property and Peculiar, and ought ſo intirely to be devoted to him, that 'tis a kind of Spiritual Fornication and Adultery to admit any Creature into a Partnerſhip with him in our Love. I know but of one ſort of Spiritual Sin beſides that is call'd *Adultery* in Scripture, and that is the Sin of *Idolatry*, which goes frequently by the Name of going a *Whoring* after other Gods. And ſo in like manner the Love of the Creature is here ſaid to be *Adultery*, which implies that they are in great meaſure the ſame, as having one common Name, and that every Lover of the Creature is in his proportion an Idolater. And ſo upon our former Principle he is. For by loving Creatures we ſuppoſe them our Goods, that they are able to act upon our Souls and affect them with pleaſing Senſations, that they perfect our Being and are the Cauſes of our Happineſs, which is to ſuppoſe them to be as ſo many Gods. So that there can be no ſuch thing as loving the World with *Moderation*, ſince we ought not to love it at all. For we *deifie* the Object that we love, and to affect the Creature in any degree is ſo far to *idolize* it.

To the like purpoſe may be applied that remarkable Paſſage of St. *Paul*, *The*

World is crucified unto me, and I unto the World, Gal. 6. 14. which emphatically compriſes our preſent Concluſion (that the Creature is not to be the Object of our Love) though not (as I once thought) the *Ground* of it. The Apoſtle here declares himſelf to be crucified to the World, not only indifferently or moderately affected towards it, but perfectly dead and cold to all its Embraces, and altogether inſenſible and unmoved at all its Charms. For indeed to what purpoſe ſhould a Man hug and imbrace a Carcaſe, or be *alive* to that which is *dead* to him? Let me imbrace the World never ſo long I ſhall never be able to impart a vital Heat to it, to quicken it into Life and Motion; but that perhaps may communicate ſome of its Coldneſs to me, chill and benumb my Faculties. It may if I throw my Arms about it and imbrace it; but I will not, I will be as dead to that as that is to me, keep at a diſtance from it, and not glance one languiſhing Look towards it, but rather treat it as a dead Carcaſe; bury it out of my ſight, and leave it to putrifie in Silence and Forgetfulneſs.

And thus have I repreſented the full and true Latitude and Extent of *Divine Love*, and in that the full and true Import of this firſt and great Commandment of loving the Lord our God with our whole Heart, Soul

and

and Mind, which now appears to be a great Commandment indeed, both worthy of him that gave it, and worthy of that ſolemn Mark of Attention wherewith it was delivered, *Hear, O Iſrael*, Deut. 6. 4. And let all the whole Creation hear and with Silence attend to the Words of this great Law, which leſt any ſhould fancy himſelf exempt or unconcern'd, ſeems to be expreſly directed to every particular Creature by Name, as it were, in the ſecond Perſon. *Thou* ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, all thy Soul, and all thy Mind. *My Son, give me thy Heart*, we may now ſuppoſe to be the Language of the Great God to every Rational Creature. Give me thy Heart, for 'twas I that made it, 'twas I that gave it thee, 'twas I that kindled in it a vital Flame, 'twas I that gave it its Pulſe and its Motion, and that for no other end but to direct and incline it towards me, the only proper Object of its tendency. For 'tis I alſo that am thy true Good, all thy Springs are in me, 'tis I that refreſh thy dry and thirſty Soul with the Streams of *Eden*, 'tis I that raiſe in thee all thy grateful Senſations, and am the true Cauſe of all thy Pleaſure and Delight. Therefore, my Son, give *me* thy Heart. I only merit, and 'tis I alone that can reward thy Love; Let none therefore have any Share

Share in it but me, and let me have it all. This is the Meaſure of Divine Love, and this is the Scope and Intendment of this great Law, and theſe are the Natural and Moral Reaſons upon which it is founded. By which you may ſee what noble Divinity may be dug up out of the Mines of Philoſophy, and how neceſſary it is to have a right Syſtem of Nature in order to the thorough Comprehenſion of *Chriſtian Morality*, which has its Bottom and Foundation in the Nature of things, and is accordingly as capable of Demonſtration as any Theorem in that Science, whoſe Character is *Evidence* and *Certainty*.

If it ſhould now be objected (as 'tis very probable it may) that the enlarging this Firſt Commandment to ſuch a Magnitude, will make it devour and ſwallow up the Second. For if the Love of God muſt be thus perfect and entire, ſo as to be excluſive of all Creatures, what room can then be left for the Love of our *Neighbour?* To this the Anſwer is very eaſie and very clear. If our Love to God and our Neighbour were of the ſame kind, the entire Love of the former would indeed wholly exclude that of the later. But this is not the Caſe. We are not here ſuppoſed to love God in the ſame ſenſe, or with the ſame ſort of Love wherewith we love our Neighbour.

We

We do not love God by wiſhing any Good to him (whereof he is not capable) but by wiſhing him as a Good to our ſelves. On the contrary, we do not, or at leaſt ſhould not love our Neighbour by wiſhing him as a Good to our ſelves, (for he is not our Good) but by wiſhing Good to him. That is in ſhort, we love God with Love of *Deſire*, and we love our Neighbour with Love of *Benevolence* or Charity. But now the entire Deſire of God is very conſiſtent with all manner of Benevolence to our Neighbour. It does indeed wholly exclude all love of Deſire towards him. But this is what I contend for, I would have the Love of God ſo vehement and ſo ardent, as to burn up, devour, yea, utterly annihilate all *Deſire* of the Creature.

Muſt I not then you'll ſay, at all love Creatures? What may I not love this or that delicate Fruit, or this or that rich Wine? May not I love what delights my Palate, and yields me pleaſure? Yes, if Bodies were the true Cauſes of your pleaſure, you might, nay you ought to love them, as being upon that ſuppoſition your proper Good. But this is the very thing they are defective in; we have clear and inconteſtable Reaſon to aſſure us, that they are not the true real Cauſes of any of our Senſations. But however, there is

Pleaſure

Pleaſure, you'll ſay, *annex'd* to them; for we feel Pleaſure in the *Uſe* of ſuch and ſuch ſenſible things. True, we do ſo, but the moſt that ought to be concluded from hence is, that we may *ſeek* and *uſe* theſe ſenſible things, to which by the Order and Inſtitution of Nature, Pleaſure is annex'd: As on the contrary, that we are to ſhun and avoid thoſe ſenſible things to which is annex'd the oppoſite Sentiment of Pain. But it will not hence follow, that either the former is to be loved, or the later to be fear'd. 'Tis true indeed, that Pleaſure it ſelf is always lovely, and ſo is the true Cauſe of it. We muſt love whatever is able to cauſe Pleaſure in us, and in whoſe power it is to make us Happy. But then we muſt take heed leſt we miſtake that for the true *Efficient Cauſe* which is only the *Occaſion*; leſt we attribute our Senſations to Bodies as their proper Effect, to the production of which they ſerve only as Poſitive *Conditions*, determining the Operation of God, the only true Efficient Cauſe. So much indeed muſt be allow'd them, but our Reaſon will not ſuffer us to allow them any more; and though in regard that they do ſo much they may be innocently *ſought* for and *uſed*, yet becauſe they do no more, they muſt not be *loved*. As we *muſt* love the Efficient Cauſe of our Pleaſure,

Pleaſure, ſo we *may* ſeek after, and make uſe of that which is the Occaſion of it; but this is all, we muſt not advance one ſtep higher, for we have no Warrant beyond this. So that though I may eat of a pleaſant Fruit, and enjoy Pleaſure in the uſe of it, yet I muſt not make it the object of my Love; I muſt not place any degree of Affection upon it. I am to remember, that though in the Eating of this Fruit I find my ſelf delighted, yet this Pleaſure is neither in the Fruit it ſelf, nor from it, but that 'tis God that raiſes this grateful Sentiment in my Soul, and accordingly I am thankfully and devoutly to acknowledge and reverence his Divine Operation, and to *Love him* all the while I *uſe* and *enjoy* the *other*. The ſhort then of this matter reſolves into this, we may ſeek and uſe ſenſible things *for* our Good, but we muſt not love them *as* our Good.

But may we not love the Creatures with a *Relative* Love? So indeed it is ſaid by ſome, who think they ſtrain the Love of God to a very high Pitch, when they tell us, that we muſt love nothing but God, or in Order and Relation to God. So then, according to theſe Men, we are allow'd to love Creatures, provided it be in a way of Relation and Subordination to God, who upon this Principle is not to be the *Only*, but

but only the *Final* and *Ultimate* Object of our Love. But methinks theſe Men's Relative Love is very much like the Relative Worſhip of the Papiſts. They make God the only *ultimate* Object of all Divine Worſhip; and ſo do theſe Men make him the only *laſt* Object of Love; But yet they allow of giving Divine Worſhip to a Creature, provided it be in a *tranſitive* and *relative* way; that is, provided it only paſs through the Creature, and terminate upon God. And ſo theſe Men allow of beſtowing our Love upon a Creature, provided it be for God's ſake, or in *relation* to God, provided it do not ſtop and reſt at the Creature, but run on, till at laſt it fix upon God as its final Object. The Notions are exactly Parallel to each other, and they both ſhew how extreamly loath Men are to take a final leave of the Creature, to diſengage intirely from ſenſible things. They cannot be perfectly wean'd from what they ſo dearly affect, and therefore would fain contrive the matter ſo, as in the midſt of all their Love and Devotion to God, to have ſtill ſome Reſerve for the Creature; to maintain ſome little under-Current of Religion and Affection for ſenſible things, which they would ſtill have leave to Worſhip and Love, though it be never ſo remotely and indirectly, though it be but in

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a *Relative* way. This I take to be the true Ground and Bottom of both theſe Notions, the Common Diſeaſe of our Nature, the great Propenſity of the Soul to ſenſible things, which makes Men ſtill willing to allow them a ſhare both in their Religion and in their Affection; and that they might do it with the better Colour, has put them upon finding out this Notable Diſtinction of a *Relative Worſhip*, and of a *Relative Love*. And truly I think one is as good as the other; that we may as well Worſhip the Creature with a Relative Worſhip, as well as Love the Creature with a Relative Love. For 'tis plain that this later Diſtinction does as much ſuppoſe that God only is the *proper* Object of *Love*, as the other does ſuppoſe that he is the only *proper* Object of *Worſhip*, otherwiſe what need this Qualification of our Love to the Creature that it be *Relative*? Well, but if ſo, then as to worſhip the Creature though but *Relatively*, is to give that Worſhip to the Creature which is proper to God; ſo to love the Creature though but *Relatively*, is in like manner to give that Love to the Creature which is proper to God. And if this be thought a ſufficient Reaſon to diſallow of a *Relative Worſhip*, I cannot ſee why we ſhould not for the very ſame Reaſon give Sentence againſt this *Relative Love*, or why one

one ſhould not be reckon'd Idolatry as well as the other. But to bring this Matter to a compendious Iſſue, the ſhort is this; either Creatures are truly and really lovely, as being our true and proper Good, or they are not. If they are, then a Relative Love is too *little*, we ought to love them with more than a Relative Love, we ought to love them Abſolutely and for themſelves. But if they are not (as by a Light as clear as Day it appears they are not) then even a Relative Love is too *much*. For what is not truly lovely, is always loved too much if it be loved at all. So that either way there is no Pretence for admitting this laſt expedient of our Concupiſcence, the Relative Love of the Creature. And thus all the Doors and Avenues of the Heart of Men are ſhut faſt and bolted againſt the Creatures, who are now all baniſh'd from this Seat of Love, and God only left in Poſſeſſion there.

Thus it is in *Theory*, but oh when will it be thus in *Practice*? When will degenerate Mankind riſe up to this noble Pitch of Divine Love? When ſhall we thus love the Lord our God with our whole Heart, Soul and Mind? When ſhall we be thus looſe and free from the Creatures? When ſhall we learn to lift up our Hearts above this ſenſible World? When ſhall we exalt

exalt our Souls above the Love of Bodies? When ſhall we leave off to idolize Matter? *O wretched Men that we are, who ſhall deliver us from the Body of this Death!* Rom. 7. 24. The Soul by her Body has contracted ſuch an Alliance with the Material World, that we have a ſort of Magnetick Inclination towards ſenſible things which in ſome Men is exalted to that degree, that inſtead of loving *God* with all their Hearts, Souls and Minds, they love the *World* at that rate, making that their God, their End, their Supream Good. Wonderful Stupidity, as well as Impiety, to love that beyond and more than God, which we are not ſo much as to love at all! What a Reverſe is this of this great Law, to love the World as we are commanded to love God, with our whole Heart, Soul and Mind! Who would ever think it poſſible that the Great God ſhould be thus out-rivall'd by his Creatures? But the miſery of it is, as we *live* by Senſe, ſo we *love* alſo by Senſe. We dwell in Matter, and we are inviron'd all round with Matter, ſo that we cannot get through the Croud and Throng of Creatures to come at our God. The Creatures do ſo preſs upon us, and ſo continually court our Love by addreſſing themſelves to all our Senſes, that we cannot deny their importunity. They alſo have the advantage

of being the only Objects of our Sight, for none ſhall ſee me and live, ſaith God. Let us enlarge our Proſpect never ſo far and wide, we ſee nothing but Creatures. In them our Proſpect begins, and in them it terminates. They alſo have the Priviledge to ſtand before us and look us, as it were, in the Face whenever we feel Pleaſure or Pain; and 'tis at their Impreſſion that we ordinarily have theſe Sentiments, which impoſes upon our Imaginations, making us apt to look upon them as the Cauſes of our Good and of our Evil, and accordingly as the proper Objects of our Love, and of our Fear; and all becauſe we have our Senſations at their Preſence and upon their Impreſſion, while in the mean while God, who is the true Cauſe, appears not in view, but hides himſelf from us, and acts *his* part behind a Cloud. But were our Eyes once open'd, could we but ſee how abſolutely and intirely we depend upon God both for our Being and for the whole Perfection of it, for all that we are, have or enjoy; how he alone acts in us, and cauſes our Senſations; how he inlightens our Underſtandings with his Light, warms our Wills with his Love, and refreſhes our Souls with his *Pleaſure*, while in the mean time all the Creatures ſtand mute and ſilent before him, and like ſo many *Cyphers*, in his Preſence, having

having not the leaſt Activity or Operation upon our Spirits; I ſay, could we have ſuch a Scene as this before us, we ſhould quickly diſmiſs the whole Creation from our Hearts, and be wholly poſſeſs'd and ſwallow'd up with the Love of God. We ſhould then love God as God loves himſelf, not with the ſame *Infinity*, but with the ſame *Intireneſs* of Love. For as God loves none but himſelf, ſo ſhould we then love nothing but God.

In the mean while I make no queſtion but that it is *now* thus in *Heaven*. The Saints and Angels there with their Beatifick Viſion of God, have alſo a clear Sight of their abſolute and intire dependence upon him. They ſee the true Origin of all Good, and can trace Happineſs to its Head. They ſee where and whence its Springs do riſe, that they all iſſue forth from the Foot of the Throne, where is the *Well* of *Life* ſpoken of both by the *Pſalmiſt* and by St. *John*, Pſal. 36. Rev. 22. 1. whence all the Streams of Pleaſure take their ſeveral Channels to water and refreſh the myſtical *Eden*, the Intellectual Garden of God. All this which we are now fain to argue out by a train of Conſequences, is plainly laid open to the clear view of the bleſſed Inhabitants of that Place, which muſt neceſſarily repreſent God to them as the only lovely Object, and by conſequence

take off every degree of their Love from the Creature, and collect together, and settle the whole Force and Weight of it upon God, that so *he may be All in All.* This is the Measure of Divine Love in Heaven, and this ought to be the Measure of it upon Earth.

With Angels therefore and Arch-Angels and with all the Company of Heaven, let us unclasp our Arms from the Imbraces of the Creation, and adore and love the Lord our God with our whole Heart, Soul and Mind. Let not God any longer divide with the Creature (which is not a fit Companion for so Divine a Guest) but let him reign an absolute Monarch in our Hearts, and ingross our whole Love, especially since that whole is so little. Love is the great *Bias* which God has put into our Natures to carry us towards himself. And thither let it carry us, and there let it fix and lodge our Souls, which are then in their greatest Perfection when in the full and intire *Love* and *Enjoyment* of God. To whom be all Glory and all Love. *Amen.*

A

DISCOURSE

CONCERNING

The Natural, and the Moral Vanity of Man.

Psal. 39. 6.

Surely every Man walketh in a vain Shew, surely they are disquieted in vain.

Or as in the other Translation,

Man walketh in a vain shadow, and disquieteth himself in vain.

EVen *Man*, who was made and intended by God for the greatest and most excellent End, and was accordingly furnish'd

with all proper Means for the attainment of this End, having an excellent Nature given him, duly temper'd and pois'd between dry Intelligence and blind Appetite, being altogether neither One nor the Other, but inrich'd with Vigour of Inclination, and a Bright Underſtanding to govern it, with the Light of Reaſon, and with the Flame of Paſſion, having at once the advantage both of Sail and Compaſs, and ſo capable both of knowing, chuſing, and enjoying his Supreme and Only Good.

Even *Man*, who is the very Draught and Tranſcript of his Creator, and the Maſter-piece of all his Lower Creation; Who has Dominion given him over all the Vegetable and Senſitive World; upon whom both Sun and Moon wait, and the Stars in their Courſes pay Attendance, to whom the very Angels are Guardians, and for whoſe ſake the Heavenly Bodies both *Move* and *Shine*. Who upon his entrance into Being, put his Maker to the Stand, gave infinite Wiſdom a Pauſe, and raiſed a Solemn Conſultation in Heaven, as being at once the Concluſion and the Compendium of the ſix days Work.

Even Man, who *applies his heart to know, and to ſearch, and to ſeek out Wiſdom, and the Reaſon of things*, that Grafts the Accompliſhments of Art upon the Stock of Nature

Nature, and by the improvement of Study and Education ſtands upon higher ground, and diſtinguiſhes himſelf as much from the Common Pitch of Men, as they are diſtinguiſh'd from the Level of Beaſts. Man that is ſaluted with the Titles of *Learned* and *Wiſe*, that is ſuppoſed to underſtand all Myſteries, and all Knowledg, and (which is more) that does really underſtand his own Ignorance; that knows much, and that that much is little; and ſo is not lifted up with his knowledg, nor has his Head turn'd with the Height upon which he ſtands. Man too that towres and plumes upon his Endowments, that views himſelf with the magnifying end of the *Proſpective*; and others with that which Contracts; that has ſome Wildom, and pretends to a great deal more; that ſits down and enjoys his paſt Attainments, thinking himſelf too Wiſe (as others too Dull) for further Improvement: Man, let him be what he will for Eminence, either Really or in Opinion, either by Nature or by Art, as Great and Noble a Creature as he is, and as Great as he takes himſelf to be, notwithſtanding all his real and all his imaginary Grandeur, *He walketh in a vain ſhadow, and diſquieteth himſelf in vain.*

The Words are a very mean and degrading Character of a very high and Noble Creature, enough to mortifie and take him down in the midſt of all his Pride and Glory, as preſenting to his View (what he ſeldom has the Happineſs to ſee) a true Picture of himſelf, and that ſet in a true and proper Light, pointing out and deſcribing a twofold Vanity of Man, the Vanity of his State, and the Vanity of his Life; the one a Moral, and the other a Natural Vanity; which indeed is all the Vanity that a Creature is capable of.

For 'tis to be conſider'd, that the words are a particular inſtance and reaſon of a general Propoſition. The Pſalmiſt had ſaid juſt before that *every Man living is altogether Vanity*, or, *Vanity all over*; and then immediately adds as a Reaſon of ſo ſevere a Reflection, *For man walketh in a vain ſhadow, and diſquieteth himſelf in vain.* As if he had ſaid, there are but two poſſible ways whereby Man may become Vain: Or, there is but a twofold Vanity that Man, or any other Creature is capable of, Vanity of *State*, and Vanity of *Life*; that Vanity which relates to the Nature and Being, and that which relates to the Demeanour and Conduct of a Creature; and both theſe are found in Man. The Vanity of Nature, in that he walketh in a *Vain Shadow*,

and

and the Vanity of Conduct, in that he alſo *diſquiets himſelf in Vain*. And therefore Man is altogether Vanity.

Altogether Vanity, ſo we render it, more according to the Septuagint than the Hebrew. In the Hebrew it is *Univerſal Vanity*; as if all the Vanity and Miſery that is ſcatter'd up and down among other Creatures, were collected together and ſumm'd up in Man; ſo that Man ſhould be, as it were, a little Abridgment or Compendium of Vanity. In the Septuagint it is τὰ σύμπαντα ματαιότης, *quoad Omnia Vanitas*, Vanity as to all things, as to every part, and in every reſpect, in what Poſture, or in what Light ſoever you place him, or in what Capacity or Relation ſoever you conſider him. And between theſe two Rendrings there is conſiderable difference, even as much as there is between ſaying, that Man is *All Vanity*, and that *All of Man* is Vanity; One making Vanity to poſſeſs the Whole of Man, and the other making Man to poſſeſs or ingroſs the Whole of Vanity; which indeed is the ſtronger and bolder expreſſion of the two.

But we need not be very ſolicitous about this; for take it in what ſenſe you will, either that Man is Univerſal Vanity, according to the *Hebrew*, or that he is Altogether Vanity, according to the *Septuagint*; they

they are both of them equally and sufficiently deducible and justifiable from this very strange, and very Melancholy Account the Psalmist gives of Man, that he *walketh in a Vain Shadow, and disquiets himself in Vain.* Wherein you have all the Vanity that is or possibly can be, all that Man or any other Creature is capable of, Vanity of State or Being, and Vanity of Conduct, both Natural and Moral Vanity.

And first of all to begin with the Natural Vanity of Man, the Vanity of his State or Being, expres'd in the former part of the Text, *Man walketh in a Vain Shew or Shadow.* In an Image, for so the Original צלם signifies) not a solid substantial Image, but Airy, Flitting, and Phantastick Appearance, such as is in a Looking-Glass, or in a Dream, or in a Shadow. In such an Image does Man Walk, and is a kind of a *Spectrum* even while he lives. We read in the Scripture and elsewhere, of the *Shadow of Death*; and truly the Darkness and Obscurity of that State is ground enough for the Figure. But here we meet with another sort of Shadow, the Shadow of *Life*, and that a Vain Shadow too, a Shadow without a Substance, a Shew without any Reality, a meer Apparition. For such, and no better, is the whole State and Being of Man in this World. Indeed at the Opening of the next Scene,

Scene, when the Veil of Mortality ſhall be laid aſide, and the Curtain that now parts between the Material and Intellectual World ſhall be drawn, 'tis to be hoped that a more Subſtantial View of things ſhall be laid out before him, but at preſent the beſt account we can give of him is, *that he Walks in a Vain Shadow.*

For the illuſtration of this, I might eaſily take the whole Frame of Man in pieces, and as a ſort of *Moral Anatomiſt*, read a Lecture of Vanity upon every Part, upon his Body, and upon his Soul, and upon the Powers and Faculties of each. I might tell you of the Weakneſs and Frailneſs of his Body, that as it carries within it ſelf the Cauſes of a neceſſary and ſpeedy Diſſolution: So it is alſo liable to a thouſand Accidents *without* that may haſten its ruin. A Structure of ſo difficult a raiſing, of ſo uncertain a ſtanding, and of ſo ſhort duration, that ſome have wonder'd, and made it an Objection againſt the Wiſdom of the great Artiſt, that he would beſtow ſo much Art upon ſuch Vile Materials, that he would be ſo elaborate upon a Trifle, and ſpend ſuch a deal of curioſity and exactneſs upon ſo tranſitory, ſo periſhing a Work, the very delicacy and fineneſs of whoſe Compoſition ſubjects it to innumerable Diſorders, whereof the Soul alſo has a

ſhare,

ſhare, and is a very ſenſible Partaker. A Work ſo form'd and laid out for Ruin, ſo naturally doom'd and order'd to Deſtruction, that though no other particular Evil ſhould befall it, yet the whole Machine and Revolution of the Univerſe labours to deſtroy it, and the great and general Motion of Nature is continually carrying away ſome part of it, as the conſtant Courſe of a great and ſwift River, undermines the Foundations of a Building.

I might alſo repreſent to you the many Wants and Neceſſities of our Nature, and our great dependance upon other Inferiour Creatures, as well as upon thoſe of the ſame Order with our ſelves. The great helpleſneſs and infirmity of two parts of our little Time, *Infancy* and *Old Age*, and that great diſorder of Sickneſs to which the whole is liable. That even our very Life and Health depend upon a Diſeaſe (for Hunger and Thirſt are no better) and the neceſſary Recruit of our Spirits upon the interruption of our Reaſon, and the waſte of our Time, almoſt half of which is conſumed in Sleep, that great *Tax* and *Cuſtom* of Nature upon the Life of Man.

The Vanity of whoſe preſent ſtate, I might further deſcribe from the Darkneſs of his Underſtanding, and the Narrowneſs of his Conception, which is able to apply it

ſelf

ſelf but to one Single Object at a time; and that too ſo imperfectly, that he is fain oftentimes to divide the moſt Simple Being into ſeveral partial, inadequate Idea's, (being not able to take it in all at once) to contract and leſſen the Object, that ſo he may adjuſt and proportion it to his own Narrowneſs. I might here alſo remark how few are the things that he knows even as to their meer *Exiſtence*, and how much fewer yet as to their *Nature*. That he knows but little of God, and little of his Works. That he is equally baffled and confounded by the Myſteries of Faith, and by the Appearances of Nature: Not to ſay any thing of the Mazes and Labyrinths of Providence. That he knows nothing of Spirits, and but little of Bodies, and leaſt of all of that Particular Body to which he is ſo wonderfully and ſo cloſely united, that he often takes it for *Himſelf*; which he animates and governs, and (ſuch is his misfortune) more often *ſerves*.

All this I might yet further illuſtrate from the great irregularity of the Will and Paſſions; which indeed is the weakeſt and blindeſt ſide of Man, the darkeſt part of this *Shadow*, and in which reſpect alone he may well be ſaid to *Walk in a Vain Shew*, and to be *altogether Vanity*. But I ſhall content my ſelf to have given a Confuſe Glance

Glance at theſe things, leaving the more particular improvement of theſe few general Hints to your own private thoughts, while in the mean time I deſcend to ſome more concerning and leſs obvious Conſiderations.

What we are now upon, is to give an Account of the Natural Vanity of Man, and how he *Walks in a Vain Shew*. I know I ſhould appear too Abſtract and Metaphyſical, and withall, Paradoxical to moſt vulgar and unprepared Minds, ſhould I account for this by ſaying, That the whole Viſible and Senſible World is, as to us, a *Vain Shew*, a meer Cheat, a Deluſion, a Dream. Not I mean as to the *Exiſtence*, but as to the *Appearance* of Senſible Objects. That what we think we ſee, taſte, and ſmell in Bodies that are without us, is not really in the Bodies themſelves, but is all tranſacted within our own Minds. That the warmth of the Fire (to ſpeak popularly) and the Light of the Sun, the ſweet Odours of Flowers, and the delicious Reliſh of Fruits, the rich Enamel of the Field, and the Bluſhes of the Morning, with all the whole Varniſh and Imagry of Colours, with which both the Senſe and Underſtanding of Man is ſo refreſh'd and entertain'd, and for the ſake of which we think the World ſo pleaſant a Region, are ſo Airy and Chearful

Chearful in it, and ſo loath to leave it, that all theſe are not in the things themſelves, where we think we perceive them, but are only certain *Modifications* of our own Souls, certain Senſations raiſed in them by the Author of Nature at the Preſence of outward Bodies, and upon the impreſſion which they make upon our Organs of Senſe. So that the whole World is like an *inchanted Iſland*, where we have fine Landskips and Pictures preſented to our View; and that in ſo lively a manner, that we cannot forbear thinking that 'tis all a Reality without, when in the mean while, there is nothing of all this real but the *Senſation*, the whole being only an *Intellectual Scene*, tranſacted within our own ſelves. I ſay, ſhould I make this to be the Condition of Man in this World, and that thus he *Walks in a Vain Shew*, among Cheats and Deluſions, empty Repreſentations and Falſe Appearances, his whole Natural Life being no better than a pleaſing Dream, I ſhould offer nothing more than what is ſtrictly and Philoſophically true, and what I could eaſily Demonſtrate upon the beſt Principles of Science that ever yet appear'd in the World. But this being too abſtract and remote from Common Apprehenſion, I ſhall chuſe rather to obſerve.

I. *That*

I. *That Man walketh in a Vain Shew of Truth.* Not that I would be thought ſo much a *Sceptic* as to deny that there is any ſuch thing as *Truth*, or that we may have the *Knowledge* of it, or that we may alſo have a full and certain *Aſſurance* of that Knowledge. I readily grant, that there are not only things that *are* true, but that *muſt* be true, that there are neceſſary and eternal Truths; and he that denies that there is any ſuch thing as Truth, ſuppoſes at leaſt that Propoſition of his to be true, whereby he ſufficiently confutes himſelf. And I do as little queſtion the being of Knowledge and Certainty. I am well ſatisfied, that Reaſon aſſures us of the Exiſtence of ſome things, and Revelation of more, and that God has given to every Man Light and Knowledge enough to inſtruct him in his Duty, and to direct him in the Way that leads to Heaven, enough to anſwer all thoſe wiſe Ends for which God deſigned him, though perhaps not enough to compaſs ſome of thoſe falſe Ends of Vanity, Ambition and Curioſity which Man may propoſe to himſelf. And that every Man has or may have Underſtanding enough to Live well, and be a good Chriſtian, though every one cannot be a *Virtuoſo*.

When

When therefore I ſay that Man walketh in a Vain Shew of *Truth*, my Meaning is, that of thoſe many things which do ſeem to us here to be Truths, the far greateſt part are far otherwiſe in their own Nature, and do appear otherwiſe to brighter Underſtandings that view them in a clearer and purer Light. Not but that Truth and right Reaſon is one and the ſame in both Worlds, but a great deal of that which we take for Truth, is otherwiſe conceiv'd by Beings of a ſuperior Rank. I will not go ſo high for this as the ſupreme Being, concerning whom we are expreſly told, that *his Thoughts are not like our Thoughts, nor his Ways like our Ways*; Iſa. 55.8. but if an Angel were to write a Syſtem of Philoſophy or Divinity, there is reaſon to think that he would give an Account of things very different from what is vulgarly receiv'd, ſince even Men in their more mature and improved Age do often find reaſon to retract and unravel their greener Sentiments, and enter upon a new Set of Thoughts. An eminent Inſtance of which we have in St. *Auſtin*, who retracted a great part of his former Doctrins; and were his deceaſed Spirit now to have another Review of his Works, 'tis like he would retract even ſeveral of his Retractions.

But not to meddle any farther with the

different Sentiments of *Superiour* Beings, we may be ſufficiently ſenſible what a Vain Shew of Truth we walk in from that Difference of Apprehenſion that is among our ſelves. That great Diverſity of Opinion, and Variety of Contradiction that is in the World, is a ſufficient Argument of this. For it being impoſſible that among contradictory Opinions any more than one of a ſide ſhould be in the right, 'tis certain that all the reſt can only have a *Vain Shew* of Truth. And if you would know how great the Extent of that is, do but conſider what Diverſity of Opinion there is among Men. This might be ſhewn throughout the whole Compaſs of Science; but I ſhall inſtance at preſent only in *Religion*, where Man has the greateſt Concern to ſeek after the *Truth*, and with all the greateſt Light and Aſſiſtance to find and diſcover it, and yet 'twould even maze one to think how very different and oppoſite the Conceptions of Men are in this Matter, and what variety of Religions there are in the World, there being hardly two Men to be found even of thoſe that profeſs to be of the ſame Religion in general, nay and of the ſame Sect and Way in particular, that are all throughout of the ſame Judgment. Chriſtians differ not only from thoſe which are not Chriſtians, but from one another. Papiſts

Papiſts from Proteſtants, and each of theſe from one another. So that were one to give an Account of all the oppoſite Perſuaſions in Religion that are now going at once, one might ſooner make a *Voluminous* than a *Perfect* Hiſtory. But now Truth is One and Intire, and of all theſe ſeveral Religious Perſuaſions there can be but one of a ſide that is true; and therefore the Maintainers of all the reſt muſt walk in a Vain Shew, and embrace Error inſtead of Truth. How far theſe Errors may prove damnable to them is another Queſtion; I only remark at preſent how vaſtly numerous and extenſive the Errors and Miſtakes about Religion muſt needs be where the Diverſity and Contradiction is ſo great, and where the Truth is ſo ſingle. But I alſo obſerve

II. *That Man walketh in a Vain Shew of Happineſs.* And this is a much vainer Shew than the other; For there is ſome real Truth to be found (tho we muſt dig low for it) and of that which we embrace for ſuch all is not mere Shew and Shadow. But now 'tis moſt certain and demonſtrable both from Reaſon and from Experience, from the Nature of Things and from the Nature of Man, that there is no ſuch thing as true and real Happineſs to be found in this State. For *with thee is the Well of Life*,

Pſal. 36. 9. that Well whoſe living Water can be a conſtant Spring within our Souls, to quench and ſatisfie that great and general Thirſt of Human Nature, which will be allay'd only by him that made it, the *Fountain* of Being and Happineſs. With thee is the Well of Life, and with thee only; We have here only the Shadow of it, which can no more ſatisfie the Deſire of our Spirit, than a painted River can quench our natural Thirſt. He that drinks of this Water will thirſt again, nay he will thirſt even while he drinks it.

Plato is ſaid to call Light the ſhadow of God, and 'tis as true of all the other pleaſing and refreſhing Things of this World as well as of Light, that they are Shadows, and but Shadows of God the ſupreme and only ſubſtantial Good. And as a Shadow, though it may a little refreſh and allay our *Heat*, will yet never be able to quench our *Thirſt*, ſo the good Things of this World (thoſe little Shadows of the true Good) though they may by the help of our Fancy afford us ſome Refreſhment, can never yield us Satisfaction. *Cool* they may (as Shadows do) but cannot *Quench*.

And yet though 'tis thus certain that there is no ſuch Thing as true and real Happineſs to be had in this State, it muſt be confeſt that there is at the ſame time ſo flattering

flattering, ſo bewitching an *Appearance* of it, that the wiſeſt of Men after all their Reaſonings, Reflections, and Experiences, are deluded by it. Though they have tried the Vanity, the Nullity of Fruition never ſo often, and have found it to be all over Cheat and Fallacy by a thouſand Experiments, yet forgetting the Treacheries of this grand Impoſtor (who like the Devil has been a Liar from the beginning) and how groſly they have been abuſed and diſappointed by him, they fall on to their Enjoyments again with as much Edge and Greedineſs, with as much Hope and Expectation, as if they had never known what Diſappointment meant; and though they can never ſay they *have* been, or *are*, yet they cannot forbear imagining that they *ſhall* be Happy. Strange kind of Inchantment, that Men ſhould be thus condemn'd to hunt after Shadows, and embrace Dreams, to ſeek continually after Happineſs where it is not to be found, and where they know it is not to be found, by all the Reaſon and Proportion of Things, by the expreſs Declarations of God in Scripture, and by all the Experience of Man kind. But this is part of that *Vain Shew* wherein Man walks, wherein I ſay he *Walks*, but wherein he can never ſit down and reſt, every Step he makes

preſenting him with ſome new Appearance of Happineſs, and drilling him on further, ſo that he ſtill walks on, till he comes to the End of his Walk, and then turns round upon the ſame Enjoyments again; ſo that he can never get out of the *Inchanted Circle*.

This is the *Natural Vanity* of Man, and thus far he is rather to be pitied than blamed, it being all founded upon the neceſſary Weakneſs and Infirmity of his Nature. But to bring him deſervedly under the ſevereſt Cenſure, and to compleat the Character of his Vanity, he not only walks in a Vain Shew, but is withal ſuch a Fool as to diſquiet himſelf in vain; which is his *Moral* Vanity, and the next thing to be conſider'd.

He diſquieteth himſelf in vain. Inumerable are the Inſtances wherein he does ſo; but I ſhall briefly glance at a few, which I ſhall bring within the compaſs of theſe two general Heads, *Impoſſibilities* and *Unneceſſaries*. The Impoſſibilities are of two ſorts, Impoſſible Truths, and Impoſſible Goods. The Former impoſſible to be underſtood, the Latter impoſſible to be enjoy'd.

I. Man diſquiets himſelf in Vain about Impoſſible *Truths*, ſuch Truths as are not poſſible for him to Comprehend. So do all they firſt who imploy their Studies, and it may

may be write Voluminous Treatiſes about ſuch things whereof we have no manner of *Idea*, and of which Conſequently they can neither Affirm, nor Deny any thing to any purpoſe, or with any Satisfaction. As particularly about Spirits and Immaterial Subſtances, whereof we know not enough to be ever in a Capacity of Learning More, as having neither Idea, nor Principle to proceed upon, and which therefore a Man may Study a thouſand Years and be never the Wiſer. And yet how much Study and Thought has there been imploy'd, how much Time waſted, how much Sleep and Health loſt, how many Tedious Volumes Compoſed, and how many fine Heads turn'd and crack'd upon this Deſperate and unconquerable Theory!

So do they alſo Secondly, who trouble their Heads and rack their thoughts about ſuch things which though they have ſome Idea of, yet it is ſo Obſcure and Imperfect, that they can never hope to have a full and clear Comprehenſion of them, either as they are ſimply in themſelves, or as they ſtand in relation with other things. Such are all the Inquiries and Diſputes about Infinity and Eternity, about Space and Time, about the Diviſibility of Quantity, about the Principle of Individuation, about Liberty and Neceſſity, and the reconciling of Pre-

Preſcience with Contingency, about the Ends of God, and the Reaſons and Order of Providence, and the like. Theſe are the things of ſo abſtruſe a Nature, and whereof our Idea's are ſo very Confuſe and Obſcure, that we can never come to have any tolerable Comprehenſion of them, or Satisfaction about them, let us Study and Wrangle never ſo long. And yet Man is ſo Fooliſh and Vain as to diſquiet himſelf (perhaps others too) in the ſearch of ſuch impoſſible Truths, not conſidering how much better it would become him, and how much more it would be for his eaſe to learn the true Bounds that divide Opinion from Knowledg, to ſtudy the Extent of his own Capacity (which one would think ſhould be quickly learnt) and to ſit down in a quiet Ignorance of thoſe things to which his Underſtanding is not proportioned, and to know the Length of his own *Line*, ſince he cannot all the Depths of the *Ocean* in which he Sails.

II. I ſhould now ſhew Secondly, how Man Diſquiets himſelf about impoſſible *Good*, as well as impoſſible Truth, but having given a pregnant Inſtance of this already, in the conſtant and eager Chaſe after Happineſs, wherein Men both tire and delude their Souls, notwithſtanding the many repeated Experiments and Convictions of the World's

World's Vanity, I ſhall ſtay no longer upon this part, but go on to ſhew how they diſquiet themſelves about *Unneceſſaries*, which again are of two ſorts, unneceſſary Truth, and unneceſſary Good.

1. Man Diſquiets himſelf in Vain about *unneceſſary Truth.* There is no other Truth neceſſary to be made the Object of Human Study, but only that which ſerves to the Moral Conduct of Man, to the Recollection of his Mind, to the Government of his Paſſions, and to the Direction of his Life and Manners in ſuch a way as may lead him to Eternal Happineſs, that which in one word the Apoſtle calls, *The Truth which is after Godlineſs*, Tit. 1. 1. This is the only Truth that Man is concerned either to ſeek after or attain, either to know himſelf, or to promote in others. For though other Truths abſolutely and in themſelves conſidered, may be perfective of Human Underſtanding (which was made for the Contemplation of Truth) yet conſidering the preſent Station and Order of Man, he is concerned to trouble himſelf about no other than what ſerves to the Regulation of his Life and Manners, that being the only Buſineſs he has to do in this World. 'Tis certainly both the *Wiſdom* and the *Duty* of every Rational Creature to employ his Study about thoſe things only to which his Capacity

ty is proportioned, and which are of preſent Concernment to him to be informed of thoſe things that are Poſſible and Neceſſary to be known. And I know but of one ſort of things that have both theſe Conditions, *viz.* things of a Moral or Divine Nature, that relate to Life and Manners: Which are the only proper Objects for the Study of Man, as his Circumſtances now ſtand, while he is acting his Probation for another World. He is not therefore now to ſtudy what will barely accompliſh his Mind, but what will lead him to his *End*, this being the true Meaſure to be obſerved by Man in his Search after Learning and Knowledge, as I have more largely ſhewn in a * particular Treatiſe upon this Occaſion. But now if this be a true Meaſure (as by all the Principles of Reaſon it muſt) I need not ſtand to reflect how ill the General way of Study will bear it, or how Vain the Thoughts and Meditations even of the moſt Awaken'd and thinking part of Mankind will be found to be, or about how many unneceſſary Truths they diſquiet themſelves. The Subject is indeed at once too plain, and too tender to bear any further Reflexion. And therefore I ſhall haſten to conſider,

* *Reflections upon the Conduct of Human Life.*

2. How

2. How Man diſquiets himſelf in Vain about unneceſſary *Good*. I might here go a very ſhort way to work, ſince our Saviour, who well underſtood both the Nature and the Neceſſities of Man, does expreſly aſſure us that there is but *One thing Needful*, and we have as much reaſon to believe it as any part of the *Goſpel*. And if there be but One Thing Neceſſary, then how infinite are the *Unneceſſaries* or rather Impertinencies that take up and torment the Thoughts of Men! But to take a little wider Compaſs, do they not trouble and diſquiet their Minds about the Superfluities and Luxuriances of Life, fine Cloaths and rich Equipage, things that are ſo far from ſerving any Neceſſity; that they do not ſo much as add to the real and natural Convenience of Life, but rather to the Load and Burthen of it? Do they not diſquiet themſelves about Phantaſtick and Imaginary Goods; which many *Happy* Men never have, and ſome (the Wiſer they) never deſire, I mean Greatneſs, Dignity and Honour, which add as much to a Man's Happineſs, or real Worth, as a high Shoe, or as a riſing Ground does to his Natural Stature, and no more. Are they not uneaſie and full of Concern about Fame and Glory, about their Titles and their Coats of Arms, about their Pedigree and about their Poſterity,

Poſterity, about the Opinions and Cenſures of Men, what Eſtimation and reſpect they poſſeſs in their Minds, what they think, and what they ſay of them? Are they not Solicitous to procure a handſom Character in the World, and to be thought to deſerve it, to appear Witty and Ingenious, Men of Parts and Learning, of Conduct and Sagacity, and (perhaps) of Piety and Religion, and are they not inwardly troubled and diſcompoſed when they think they fail of any of theſe little Ends, or when they hear of any thing ſaid to their Diſreputation, or meet with any Diſreſpect? Do not Men diſquiet themſelves about having Heirs to a great Eſtate, Continuing their Name, and living (as they call it) in their Poſterity? Do they not trouble themſelves about Poſſibilities and Contingencies, about what Shall be, or what May be, ſo as not to be able either to enjoy the Preſent, or to be Thankful for what is paſt, merely for the anxious Concern they have about what is to Come? Nay, are there not many ſo beyond all Meaſure Sottiſh as to be poſſeſſed with a troubleſom Care of what ſhall fall out after they are Dead and in the Grave, and to leave behind them a Stock of Praiſe and Commendation, which either they ſhall not then be in a Condition to *know*, or will certainly *Deſpiſe*? So Vain is the

the Shew that Man walks in, and ſo many are the ways whereby he acts the Tyrant and the Executioner upon his own Mind, and diſquiets himſelf in Vain. A Character ſo very applicable to every Man, more or leſs, that Journies upon the Road of this World, that our Church in her Wiſdom has thought fit to appoint this Pſalm of which the Text is a part, to be uſed in her Funeral-Office at the Burying of the Dead; thereby implying, that there is no Man, though never ſo Great, Wiſe, or Good, but of whom it may juſtly be ſaid at his laſt *Exit*, and upon whoſe Tomb it may be inſcribed as the concluding *Motto* of his Life, that he has walkt in a Vain Shew, and diſquieted himſelf in Vain. Some indeed do paſs away their time ſo quietly and inoffenſively, that they do not much diſturb the Peace of *others*; but there is no Man but who vainly diſquiets *himſelf*.

Poor unhappy Creature that he ſhould do ſo! Are there not neceſſary and unavoidable Cauſes of Trouble ſufficient, but he muſt needs add Voluntary Afflictions to his heap of Miſery, impoſe ſupernumerary Penances, diſquiet himſelf, and that too in Vain, without Reaſon, and without Meaſure, to no End or Purpoſe? 'Tis indeed a very deplorable Caſe; but the conſideration of all this will ſerve to teach us two very uſeful

Leſſons

Leſſons, To be more Humble, and to be more Wiſe.

Firſt, *To be more Humble.* When Self begins to riſe up in thee, and thou findeſt thy Soul tempted to Pride and Arrogance upon the Conceit of either Natural or Acquired Excellencies, then conſider the Vain Shew, the Empty Apparition wherein Man walks, and the yet much Vainer Diſquiet wherewith he voluntarily afflicts himſelf. Take a View of thy *Picture*, of thy Natural and of thy Moral Vanity, and return to a juſter Eſtimation, to a more ſober and modeſt Account of thy ſelf. Conſider how Vain thou art in thy Nature, and how much Vainer thou art in thy Conduct, and then ſee what Ground or Foundation thou haſt for Pride; which would ill become thee as a *Creature*, but much worſe as ſuch an infirm and ill-govern'd, as ſuch a *doubly Vain* Creature.

Secondly, *To be more Wiſe.* More Wiſe indeed, than to be thus needleſly troubleſome to our ſelves; to walk about like reſtleſs and diſturb'd *Ghoſts*, and moleſt our own Eaſe and Quiet. For though we cannot help our Natural Vanity, that of Walking in a Vain Shew, yet we may in great Meaſure help and prevent that which is Moral, our diſquieting our ſelves in vain, and ſhall act very unaccountably

ably to our ſelves, and be great enemies to our own Peace and Tranquility if we do not. We ſhould think it a moſt intolerable Calamity, and that we had juſt Cauſe of Complaint, if we did ſuffer as much from others as we do from our ſelves, if they were as troubleſome to us as we are to our own Souls. A Houſe that is haunted and troubled with *Evil Spirits*, is look'd upon as a great Affliction, and ſo is a Mind that is tormented with perplex'd and uneaſie Thoughts. Theſe are great Judgments, and ſevere Trials, when they are brought upon us by a ſuperiour Hand: But are they the leſs ſo becauſe inflicted upon us by our ſelves? Or rather, does not this add to our *Miſery* the Aggravation of *Folly*?

In our Patience then let us *poſſeſs our Souls*, and be more Wiſe than to vex and torment them with vain and needleſs diſquiets, conſidering, that ſufficient to the ſhort day of Life is the *Neceſſary* Evil thereof. But if our Heads muſt work, and we will be ſolicitous, let it be where our great Concern lies, and about what deſerves our Care and Thoughtfulneſs, that is, ſo to order our Lives and Converſations while we are here, that we may be for ever Happy hereafter. To Fear God and Keep his Commandments, for that is the whole and only *Duty*, and ought therefore to be the whole and only *Concern* of Man.

A

DISCOURSE

SHEWING

That the Law is not made void through Faith.

Being a Visitation Sermon Preach'd in the Cathedral Church of *Sarum*, before the Right Reverend Father in God *Gilbert* Lord Bishop of *Sarum*, at his Visitation held there *September* 2. 1692.

Rom. 3. 31.

Do we then make void the Law through Faith? God forbid; yea, we establish the Law.

TO have a right general Notion of the *Gospel*, of those Terms and Conditions upon which God dispenses Pardon and Salvation to the World in Jesus Christ;

to

to underſtand how far it agrees with the *Law*, and how far it differs from it; in what reſpect it is an Abatement, and in what reſpect it is an Improvement of it, is a thing ſo very neceſſary to all Chriſtians, eſpecially to all Teachers and Profeſſors of Chriſtianity (as that without which no one particular Head or Point of Chriſtian Divinity can either be rightly comprehended by themſelves, or open'd and explain'd to others) that I need not queſtion the ſeaſonableneſs of a Diſcourſe upon ſuch a Subject to ſuch an Auditory, and upon ſuch an Occaſion.

I muſt confeſs, I do not much admire to have things of a *Controverſial* Nature in Sermons, whoſe buſineſs ſeems rather to lie in perſwading and ſtirring up Men to the Practiſe of Piety and good Life, than in ſtating and deciding Queſtions. But whatever may be thought of the *particular* Controverſies in Religion, many of which were perhaps better let alone than even *rightly* determin'd, ſure the Notion of the Goſpel in General, though a Notion, is yet ſo concerning and important a one (the whole Practice as well as Theory of Chriſtianity depending upon it) that I cannot but preſume that a clear and rational Account of this matter may be acceptable and ſerviceable from the *Pulpit* as from a *Divinity-Chair*;

eſpecially in an Age, when not only the particular Points of the Chriſtian Religion are corrupted, but the whole Deſign of it is miſtaken, and its general Idea altogether perverted and miſrepreſented, by a ſort of Men, who give ſuch an Account of Chriſtianity, as to overturn all *Morality*; and ſo explain the Goſpel, as wholly to evacuate the Law.

And ſince in behalf of this odd and abuſive Account of Chriſtianity, they alledge ſome ſingle Paſſages out of St. *Paul's Epiſtles*, abſtracted from the Scope and Occaſion of them, I have the rather thought fit to confront it with a paſſage from the ſame Divine Writer. A paſſage that ſeems directly level'd againſt the *Soliſidian* Hypotheſis, and which one would think ſhould ſerve as a general *Key* to the Apoſtles meaning in all his Diſcourſes about *Juſtification*, and wherein he ſeems to have laid in a Caution againſt all ſuch groſs miſconſtructions of it, as ſuppoſe him to diſſolve the Force and Obligation of the Law by Preaching up the Faith of Chriſt. The very ſuppoſition of which extravagant Conceit, the Apoſtle here rejects with all the Indignation, and all the abhorrence imaginable: *Do we then make void the Law through Faith?* ſayshe, *God forbid; yea, we eſtabliſh the Law.*

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The words conſiſt of a *Queſtion*, and an *Anſwer*. The Queſtion is, whether the Law be made void through Faith? That is by the Goſpel, or by that Account which the Apoſtle had given of the Goſpel. To which the Anſwer is ſo far in the Negative, that 'tis ſaid to be rather eſtabliſh'd by it.

By *Law* here I ſuppoſe is meant truly and chiefly the *moral* Law. For *that* Law muſt be here aſſerted not to be made void, by which it was before aſſerted that Men are not Juſtified, this being the only pretence of ſuſpicion that the Law is made void, becauſe Men are ſuppoſed not to be Juſtify'd by it. Do we then make void the Law, ſays the Apoſtle. *Then*, as much as to ſay in virtue of the Concluſion we have now laid down, that Men are not juſtified by the Deeds of it. That Law therefore which is here ſaid not to be made void, muſt be one and the ſame with that whereby Men are ſaid not to be Juſtified. Thus much is clear. But now what Law is that? Is it not the Moral Law? Yes, it is. For the Apoſtle is here treating not of the Juſtification of the *Jews* only, but alſo of the *Gentiles*. He is treating of Juſtification in *General*, and ſetting down the ſtanding Terms upon which, not this or that Perſon or Nation, but Mankind in the *Lump* muſt expect to be juſtified. Now 'twould have

been but a very empty Frigid Aſſertion to have ſaid, that Mankind in general (which will comprehend Gentile as well as Jew) is not juſtify'd by the *Ceremonial* Law. For what has the *Gentile* to do with the Law of Ceremonies? Or how could it be imagin'd that they ſhould expect Juſtification by a Law which was never given to them, and by which they never were obliged? That Law therefore by which all Men, the Gentile as well as the Jew, are here ſaid not to be juſtified, muſt be ſome *Common* Law between them both, a Law of Univerſal Extent, and Unlimited Obligation. And what Law can this be but the *Moral* Law? what other Law is common to all Mankind? And that this is the Law here meant, is further plain from the Reaſon given why Men are not juſtified by it, namely, their preſent inability to keep it, which the Apoſtle concludes from the general Corruption and Immorality of Mankind. *For we have before proved*, Ver. 9. ſays he, *both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under Sin.* Upon which occaſion he quotes and applies a paſſage out of the Pſalms, deſcribing the general Corruption of Mankind. *As it is written, There is none Righteous, no not one. There is none that underſtandeth, there is none that ſeeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable*

unprofitable, there is none that doth good, no not one, Their Throat is an open Sepulcher, with their Tongues they have uſed Deceit, the Poiſon of Aſps is under their Lips. Whoſe Mouth is full of Curſing and Bitterneſs: Their Feet are ſwift to ſhed Blood. Deſtruction and Miſery are in their ways, and the way of Peace they have not known. There is no fear of God before their Eyes. Which are all of them inſtances of *Immoralities*, or Tranſgreſſions againſt the *Moral* Law. Again, ſays he, Ver. 19. *that every Mouth may be ſtopp'd, and all the World may become guilty before God*: Which could not be in reſpect of the Ceremonial Law, becauſe that did not oblige all the World, but only a little part of it, and that too for a little time. *Therefore by the deeds of the Law*, ſays he again, Ver. 20. *there ſhall no Fleſh be juſtified in his Sight, for by the Law is the knowledge of Sin.* Which muſt neceſſarily be meant of the Moral Law, becauſe of that impoſſibility of keeping it, which he had before ſpoken of, and illuſtrated by thoſe inſtances of general Immorality, and which he again inculcates, by ſaying, that *by the Law is the knowledge of Sin.* And ſo again, *All have ſinn'd and come ſhort of the Glory of God.* Ver. 23. Which muſt needs be underſtood in reſpect of the *Moral* Law, there being no other Law by the tranſgreſſing of which

all could sin and be guilty in the sight of God. From all which, it clearly appears, that the Law by which Men are here said not to be justified, is truly the *Moral* Law.

Those Learned Men who will have the Apostle, when he asserts that we are not justified by the Works of the Law, to be understood only of the *Ceremonial* Law, are led I presume into this Sense upon the Supposition, that not to be justified by the works of the *Moral* Law, would infer the nullity of that Law, and the non-necessity of those works, and so countenance the absurd conceits of *Antinomianism* and *Solifidianism*. But there is no need for such a Jealousie or such a Scruple; for the reason given by the Apostle why Men are not justified by the Law being their inability to keep it, their being all *concluded under Sin*, 'tis plain that when he affirms that they are not justified by the Works of the Law, by *Works* he means *Perfect* Works, or exact unsinning Obedience. They are not justified by the Law, that is, by their keeping the Law, and that because they do not, cannot keep it. Now not to be justified by the Works of the Moral Law, in this Sense, (meaning by Works, *Perfect Works*,) does by no means infer the nullity of that Law, or the unnecessity of those Works,

Works, as *Conditions* to Juſtification, but only the impoſſibility of Perfect Obedience, or living abſolutely without Sin; I ſay, it does not infer a nullity of the Moral Law, as ſhall be made appear in the Proceſs: But it does infer an *Appearance*, a Seemingneſs of ſuch a thing, which is the ground upon which the Apoſtle raiſes this Objection here. Do we *then* make void the Law, namely, becauſe we ſay that Men are not juſtified by it? Does this infer its Nullity? So indeed it ſeems, but ſo it is not, as ſhall be ſhewn by and by. In the mean while, as we may ſafely as to the thing it ſelf, ſo with reſpect to the coherence of this Chapter, we muſt neceſſarily conclude, that the Law by which Men are here ſaid *not to be juſtified*, is truly the *Moral* Law, and conſequently, that that alſo is the Law which is here ſaid *not to be made void*.

Not that I would wholly exclude the Ceremonial Law from the compaſs of the Text, which in ſome reſpect may alſo be ſaid not to be made void by Faith: But then we muſt change the ſenſe of the Word καταργῶμεν here, which may ſignifie either to abrogate as to the *Authority* and *Obligation*, or to render idle and inſignificant as to the uſe and end of a Law. If by not making void here, you underſtand not abrogating as to the obliging part, then by

Law here you muſt underſtand only the *Moral* Law, ſince the Ceremonial Law is on all hands acknowledged to be *thus* made void through Faith. But if by not making void, you will underſtand (as the Word Καταργῶμεν will alſo bear) not rendring idle and inſignificant as to the uſe and end, then by Law you may alſo underſtand the Ceremonial Law, for that is not ſo made void through Faith, as to be render'd an uſeleſs and inſignificant Inſtitution. Upon this acceptation of the Word Καταργῶμεν, the Ceremonial Law may here alſo be taken in, tho if we regard the ſcope and coherence of the Apoſtle's Diſcourſe in this Chapter, I think 'tis very plain, that the Law which he here directly ſpeaks of, and which he ſays is not made void through Faith, is the *Moral* Law. So much for what is meant by *Law* here. And that by *Faith* here, is meant the Doctrin of Faith, or the Goſpel according as St. *Paul* had repreſented it, I think is very clear from the Context. The Words thus briefly ſtated, reſolve into theſe Two Propoſitions:

1. That the Goſpel does not make void the Law, meaning by Law (what I ſuppoſe the Apoſtle here principally does) the *Moral* Law.

2. That

2. That it is ſo far from making it null and void, that 'tis a real eſtabliſhment of it.

1. That the Goſpel does not make void the Law. But before I ſhew that it does not, let us reflect a little with what deteſtation and abhorrence the Apoſtle rejects the contrary Suppoſition; *God forbid*, ſays he. God forbid indeed that the Moral Law which had not only God for its Author, (for ſo had the Ceremonial Law too) but was written with his own immediate Hand, and was a Tranſcript of his own Moral Nature, a Draught of the Eſſential and Eternal Truth, Reaſon and Order of God, that was calculated for the whole intereſt of a Rational Nature, ſo as to anſwer all the ends both of private and ſocial Life, and withal ſo ſuited to the Moral *Taſte* and *Palate* of a Rational Mind, that it cannot but be highly approved by it, even in its moſt depraved condition, and in the midſt of all its Moral Diſorders; (for even the very Animal Man, as we learn from the Apoſtle, *Conſents to the Law that it is good*,) Rom. 6. 17. God forbid I ſay, that that Law of the Lord which is an undefiled Law converting the Soul; that that Teſtimony of the Lord which is Sure, and giveth Wiſdom unto the Simple; that thoſe Statutes of the Lord which are Right and rejoice the

Heart

Heart; that that Commandment of the Lord which is pure, and giveth Light unto the Eyes, according to the account of the *Psalmist*: Psal. 19. Or that that Law which is Holy, and that Commandment which is Holy, Just and Good, according to the account of St. *Paul*, Rom. 7. 12. its supposed Adversary; God forbid that such a Law so accommodated both to the Welfare and to the Reason of Mankind, and that so strikes in with the common Sentiments as well as Interest of Human Nature, that it cannot but be ever and ever liked and approved by it; (for even those that sin against it, and are eternally punish'd for it, both the Wicked upon Earth, and the Damn'd in Hell, must and do consent to it, that it is good,) God forbid that such a Law should ever be null'd or made void.

But most of all, God forbid that it should be made void by the *Gospel* that *great Mystery of Godliness, that Grace of God that has appeared to all Men, teaching us, that denying all ungodliness and worldly Lusts, we should live Soberly, Righteously and Godlily in this present World*: Tit. 2. 11, 12. By the Gospel, which the Angels publish'd with joy, as the greatest Blessing to Mankind, and which they still desire to look into, and contemplate as a mysterious mixture of Mercy and Justice, of Severity and Indulgence,

gence, which comes recommended to the World as a moſt perfect and noble Inſtitution, both aiming at, and fitted for the higheſt exaltation of Human Nature, as a moſt excellent expedient for the promotion of Holineſs and Happineſs among Men, and as the laſt application of the Divine Phyſitian for the Recovery and Reſtoration of a ſinful and degenerate World; God forbid that ſuch an Inſtitution as this ſhould make void the Law. What, ſhall that which is to reform the Lives and Manners of Men, take away that which is to be the Rule and Meaſure whereby they are to be govern'd? Shall that which is to be a general Bleſſing to the World, take away the *Natural* Inſtrument of all Civil Happineſs? What, has the Goſpel no other way to ſave Sinners but by killing the Law which condemns them? And ſhall the Author of it who was ſo zealous to fulfil all Righteouſneſs, deſtroy that Law by his Death, which he was ſo careful to fulfil by the moſt exact obedience in his Life? Or if any of theſe things may be, yet is it to be imagined that God who had ſo tender a regard for the ſacredneſs and honour of his Law, as not to admit of Sinners to pardon, without an infinite Satisfaction for the violation of it, and would therefore rather ſend his own Son to ſuffer Death, than that the diſhonour done

done to his Law ſhould not be repaired, that he ſhould yet at the very ſame time intend to aboliſh that Law, the honour of which he was ſo ſeverely vindicating, and by that very act too whereby he vindicated it? What, ſhall the Death of the Son of God, one of whoſe great ends was to *condemn Sin in the Fleſh*, Rom. 8. 3. to ſhew forth God's infinite and irreconcilable diſpleaſure againſt it, and to aſſert the Dignity of his broken Law, the honour of which could not conſiſt with Impunity? ſhall, I ſay, the Death of Chriſt which was to vindicate the Divine Law, aboliſh that very Law whoſe honour it was intended to vindicate? God forbid that any of theſe things ſhould be true, or that the glorious Goſpel of God ſhould come attended with ſo many Prejudices and Objections, with ſuch an odious, ſuch a ſcandalous Retinue as this. How then ſhall it find entrance and entertainment in the World? or how ſhall we expect to make Proſelytes to it, among ſenſible and underſtanding Men either of the Jews or of the Gentiles? How ſhall we hope to gain upon either of theſe, by ſuch a Goſpel as this? Will it not rather lie open to the Prejudice of both, and be deſervedly *to the Jews a Stumbling-block, and to the Greeks Fooliſhneſs*? 1 Cor. 1. 23. But thanks be to God, this is not the caſe (how

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fond ſoever ſome Men are it ſhould be ſo) the Goſpel is not ſuch a lawleſs thing as ſome who would fain be ſo themſelves imagin; nor does the Faith of Chriſt make void the Law, which I now come more directly and diſtinctly to ſhew.

But before I do ſo, I crave leave to lay down a neceſſary Diſtinction concerning both the Law and the Goſpel, which will be of excellent uſe and ſervice for our clearer proceeding, and for want of which the beſt Accounts that have been given concerning this matter, are generally ſo very tangled and confuſed.

I obſerve therefore, that the *Law* may be conſidered either as a *Rule* of Life and Converſation, or as a *Covenant* of Life and Death: And the ſame I note alſo in reference to the Goſpel, that it may be conſidered either as a *Rule* of Life, or as a Covenant of Life and Death. This is the Diſtinction; the Reaſon and Uſe of it will appear in the Proceſs of our Diſcourſe.

Now this being premiſed, I ſay Firſt, That the Law as 'tis taken for the *Ceremonial* Law, is indeed truly made void by the Goſpel: As it never did oblige the Gentiles, ſo it does now no longer oblige the Jews, whoſe proper Inſtitution it was, nor does it at all concern Chriſtian Converts, ſo made either from Heatheniſm or Judaiſm; that

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is, it concerns no Body now, ſo as to oblige them to the obſervance of it, but is utterly void as to all Purpoſes of a *Law*, and ſo Dead and Buried, as never to riſe again. And in this reſpect 'tis abſolutely true, what the Apoſtle ſays, that *we are not under the Law, but under Grace*, Rom. 6. 14.

Not that we are to conceive that this is done by any formal and expreſs *Repeal*; there is no need of any ſuch thing: The Law of Rites and Ceremonies ceaſes of it ſelf, the Bound or Term of its Obligation being run out and expired. For it was ordained as the Apoſtle tells us, *Gal.* 3. 19. *till the promiſed Seed ſhould come*; that is, Chriſt who in another place is ſaid to be the *end of the Law*, Rom. 10. 4. as being typifyed and prefigured by it, and who therefore by his coming, without the formality of an expreſs Repeal, puts a final period to it. I ſay, of an *expreſs* Repeal; for there is in the Goſpel a *virtual* and *conſequential* Repeal of the Law, the Goſpel bringing into the World a new ſtate of things, with which the Obſervation of the Law is not conſiſtent. Particularly as to the *Prieſthood*; for by virtue of the old Law, there was ſet up a ſpecial and peculiar ſtate in the Jewiſh Common wealth, which had a ſupream Prieſt-hood Juriſdiction and Authority of its own: But now the Goſpel introduces

duces a new ſpecial State, and a Prieſthood different from the former, having a Supream Juriſdiction over the whole World, and ſo is not conſiſtent with the other ſtate, and is therefore a Conſequential Repeal of it: According to that Poſition of the Author to the *Hebrews*, *The Prieſthood being changed, there is made of neceſſity a change alſo of the Law*, Heb. 7. 12.

Secondly, It muſt be allowed, that not only the Ceremonial, but even the *Moral* Law, ſo far as it is a *Covenant* of Life and Death, is made void by the Goſpel; that is, God does no longer require perfect and exact Obedience to the Moral Law, as the preciſe indiſpenſable condition of Salvation. Require it he does as a *Duty*, as we ſhall farther ſee by and by, (otherwiſe the coming ſhort of it would be no Sin,) but he does not exact it as a *condition* of Life; ſo that though the Law continue in force as a *Rule* yet 'tis aboliſh'd as a *Covenant*; aboliſh'd by the very nature and conſtitution of the Goſpel, which exchanges Repentance for unſinning Obedience, as the condition of Salvation. Not but that the moſt exact Obedience is a *Duty* ſtill, we owe Obedience to every Precept of the Moral Law as much as ever, and we ſin in tranſgreſſing it; but it is now no longer the neceſſary condition of Savation, ſo that the

the *Covenant* of Works is at an end, tho the *Law* of Works continue ſtill in its full force. For ſo

Thirdly, I find it neceſſary to affirm, that tho not only the Ceremonial, but even the Moral Law, conſider'd as a Covenant of Life and Death, is made void by the Goſpel, yet the Goſpel does not make void the Moral Law, as 'tis a *Rule* of Life and Manners. That the Moral Law thus conſider'd, is not made void by the Goſpel, I ſuppoſe to be the very point here intended by the Apoſtle, and that the proof of it may be the more orderly and diſtinct, it ſhall proceed according to this Three-fold gradation.

1. That the Moral Law, as 'tis a Rule of Life and Manners, is not in it ſelf *Aboliſhable.*

2. That ſuppoſe it might of it ſelf be aboliſh'd, yet 'tis not poſſible that the *Goſpel* ſhould ever aboliſh it.

3. Suppoſing it were poſſible for the Goſpel to aboliſh it, yet that *actually* and *de facto* it does not.

Each of theſe Heads might eaſily afford matter for a particular Diſcourſe, and perhaps can hardly be well diſcharged within a leſs compaſs; but ſpeaking to an intelligent Audience, that by a few hints can think out the reſt, I ſhall only briefly

ly touch upon what is moſt conſiderable.

1. I ſay that the Moral Law as 'tis a Rule of Life and Manners, is not in it ſelf *Aboliſhable*. Now for the demonſtration of this, ſhould I ſay that the Moral Law is no other than a Syſteme of neceſſary and Eſſential Order and Juſtice, Holineſs and Virtue, Reaſon and Truth, and that 'tis indeed *Materially* conſidered no other than the very Eſſence of God, (who is Eſſential Truth and Reaſon,) and that the Love of this Eſſential Order, Juſtice, Reaſon and Truth, is no other than the Love of God, the very ſame thing with *Divine Charity*, and that therefore this Eſſential Order, *&c.* muſt be as neceſſary, as eternal, and as immutable as God himſelf is, who therefore can no more cancel or aboliſh either the whole or any part of it, than he can deny himſelf; I ſay, ſhould I reaſon thus, I am ſenſible I ſhould diſcourſe very Abſtractly, but yet I queſtion not but that it would be upon ſure and certain Principles.

However, to avoid the natural Prejudice that is in ſome Men againſt very *Metaphyſical* Arguments, I ſhall chuſe rather to remark, that the Moral Law was given by God, not as an Erector of a particular Society under peculiar Circumſtances (which was the caſe of the Ceremonial Law) but

as the Author of a *Rational Nature*, and was therefore fitted to the intereſts of that Nature, and calculated for the whole ſtate of Mankind, as conſiſting of ſuch Precepts as were in themſelves neceſſary to be obſerved in order to the private and publick Happineſs of the World, according to the *Syſteme* into which it is caſt and fix'd by the great Author of Nature. For let the Moral World be caſt into what Syſteme you will, ſome Actions will reſult from it, that naturally make for its Beauty and Order, and others that tend as naturally to its diſorder: Even as let the *Natural* World be according to what Syſtem you pleaſe, ſome certain *Motions* will be for its Corruption; which by the way, is enough to ſilence all the Cavils of the *Leviathan* againſt the eternal and immutable Reaſons of good and evil. Now I ſuppoſe the Matter of the Moral Law to be ſuch, that its Precepts carry a natural and neceſſary relation to the order and well-being of the World, according to the preſent Syſtem of it, and therefore muſt laſt as long as that Syſtem laſts; for being accommodated to the condition of Human Nature in general, and not to the exigence of this or that particular Nation, Time or Place, it muſt continue as long as its Reaſon, Foundation and Meaſure does; and if God will at any time diſſolve ſuch a Law

as

as this, he muſt diſſolve *Human Nature* too.

But 2*dly*, Suppoſe the Moral Law to be of it ſelf aboliſhable, yet 'tis not poſſible that the *Goſpel* ſhould ever aboliſh it. This I may argue from the nature of the Goſpel, which is an Inſtitution of the ſame Author, and that ſerves to the very ſame end, the Order and Happineſs of the World, which can be obtained in no other way, and by no other means than by keeping up the diſtinction between *Virtue* and *Vice*, and by obliging Men to forbear the one and practice the other: That is in one Word, by keeping up the *Moral Law*, which therefore 'tis impoſſible that the *Goſpel* ſhould ever aboliſh. The *Manichees* indeed that ſuppoſed the Law and the Goſpel to come from Two contrary Principles, the one from a good God, and the other from an evil God, were conſiſtent with themſelves, in ſuppoſing the latter wholly to deſtroy the former. But ſuppoſing as we do and ought, that they both proceeded from the ſame God, and that God infinitely good, and that conſequently could deſign nothing but the good of the World, which good is not attainable any other way, but by obliging Men to live according to the rules of Virtue and Honeſty, Piety and Religion, 'tis utterly impoſſible that upon this Sup-

poſition the Goſpel ſhould overturn the Moral Law, becauſe in ſo doing, it would contradict and overturn *it ſelf*, as purſuing the very ſame end, and which cannot be obtained but by the ſame means.

But beſides, I have another more peculiar and leſs heeded reaſon to think, that 'tis impoſſible for the Goſpel to aboliſh the Law, however otherwiſe in it ſelf aboliſhable. The Apoſtle thought it abſurd, to ſuppoſe that the Covenant made by God to *Abraham*, ſhould be null'd by the Law, which was 430 Years after; *Gal.* 3. 17. now if 'twas impoſſible that the Promiſe ſhould be voided by the Law, which was given ſo long after; then much more impoſſible is it that the Law ſhould be voided by the Goſpel, which was ſo long before it. But what, you'll ſay, was the *Goſpel* before the *Law*? Yes, as to the reality of its effect, tho not as to the ſolemnity of its Promulgation: For 'tis a great, tho a popular miſtake, to think that the Goſpel commenc'd at the Appearance of the *Meſſias*. Then indeed was the full and final ratification and conſummation of it, but the thing it ſelf was long before, even ever ſince the Ceſſation of the Covenant of Works, which went no further than the Perſon of *Adam*, and expired at his Fall; immediately upon which the Goſpel took place,

place, and had thenceforward its conſtant effect, and Men were ſaved then as they are now, by Repentance and Faith in Chriſt, who is therefore ſaid to be the *Lamb ſlain from the Foundation of the World.* Rev. 13.8. Indeed the Law as 'twas a Covenant of Life and Death, was not *after* the Goſpel, but *before* it; but the Law as a Rule of Life given by *Moſes*, that which we call the Moral Law, was after the Goſpel. It was indeed before the Goſpel was fully confirm'd and publiſhed, but it was after the Goſpel had really taken place, and had had its real effects in the World. In this Senſe the Goſpel was before the Law; that is, the Goſpel had its real effects before the Moral Law was given, and therefore even upon this account 'tis impoſſible it ſhould be able to aboliſh it.

But 3*dly*, Suppoſe it were poſſible for the Goſpel to aboliſh the Law, yet this Suppoſition would do no great harm, ſo long as *actually* and *de facto* it does not: And that it does not, is moſt certain, for if it does, it muſt do it in one of theſe Two Capacities, either as 'tis it ſelf a *New Law* or Rule of Life, or as 'tis a *New Covenant*. Not as 'tis it ſelf a new Law; for ſo the Goſpel obliges us to the ſame things, and makes

all that our Duty which the Law did, with ſeveral additional Improvements; for which I appeal to our Saviour's Sermon upon the *Mount*. It binds the very ſame Duties upon the World, only in higher degrees, and by more ingaging Sanctions. 'Tis commonly ſaid indeed, that the Law required perfect and exact Obedience, whereas the Goſpel requires only *Sincerity*; but this Propoſition muſt be well diſtinguiſhed, before it be admitted. 'Tis true indeed, the Goſpel as a Covenant of Life and Death, requires only Sincerity, as adminiſtring Pardon upon Repentance; but the Goſpel as a Rule of Life, (in which reſpect it is called in Scripture *the Law of Faith* Rom. 3. 27.) requires more than Sincerity; it requires indeed the very ſame exactneſs of Obedience that the Law did, and what was our Duty before, is ſo ſtill, for Pardon ſuppoſes Sin, and Sin neceſſarily ſuppoſes a contrary Obligation. The Goſpel therefore thus conſider'd, obliges to the ſame Duties that the Law did, and to the ſame degree of Obedience, and indeed is too much one and the ſame with it, to be a Diſcharge from it.

If therefore it does make void the Law, it muſt be in the other Capacity, as it is a new Covenant of Life and Death; and

and here indeed begin the *Abatements* of the *Goſpel*, and this is that whereby it properly deſerves that *Name*, as being a Meſſage of good News to an impotent and depraved World, that were no more able to keep the *Goſpel* as it is a meer *Rule* of *Life*, than they were to keep the *Law*. The Goſpel therefore as a *Covenant*, is to come in and relieve thoſe whom it would condemn as a *Rule*: But neither thus does it make void the Law. It does indeed thus conſider'd, abate ſomething of the Rigour of it, in allowing Pardon of Sin; but then at the ſame time it conſults the honour, and keeps up the authority of it, in not diſpenſing this Pardon but upon the condition of *Repentance*. In that Sinners are admitted to Pardon by Repentance, the Law falls of its Rigor, but in that they are not admitted without Repentance, it preſerves its Sacredneſs. The ſhort is, the Goſpel as it *accepts* Repentance, qualifies the ſeverity of the Law, and as it *requires* Repentance, ſo it ſecures its Authority. But now that Repentance is the neceſſary and only condition of Pardon under the Goſpel, and that notwithſtanding the ſatisfaction of Chriſt (the effect of which is not to render it *needleſs*, but only *available*,) I ſuppoſe to be

too plain in the Scripture, and too well known to thoſe whom I now beſpeak, to need any proof. I rather take it for granted, as an acknowledg'd Principle, that the Goſpel requires Repentance as the only condition of Pardon, and thence infer, that thereby it ſufficiently provides for the authority of the Law, tho at the ſame time it indulges Pardon to thoſe who *repent* of their Tranſgreſſing it. So that you ſee the Goſpel every way conſider'd, even on this its *milder* ſide, is no evacuation of the Law: So far from that, that 'tis alſo

2. *A real eſtabliſhment of it.* It eſtabliſhes it all over, and to all real intents and purpoſes, and in every part of it, even in thoſe very parts where it ſeems moſt to make it void. As firſt of all to begin with the Ceremonial part of the Law, tho (as was acknowledged before) the Goſpel evacuates all its power and efficacy, ſo that 'tis no longer of any force or obligation, either to Jew or Gentile, yet it does not make it an idle, uſeleſs, and inſignificant Inſtitution, (one proper ſenſe of the Word Καταργέμεν) but is ſo far from that, that it perfects its Deſigns, and accompliſhes its moſt retired Significations, in all things exchanging the ſhadow for the Subſtance; but more particularly by requiring that Purity

Purity of Heart, which was figured by the Rite of Circumciſion, and by ſubſtituting the Sufferings of Chriſt in the room of the Legal Sacrifices. So that tho it ſilences the *Obligation* of the Ritual Law, yet it eſtabliſhes all the real *purport* and *intendment* of it..

Then 2*dly*, as to the Moral Law conſidered as a Covenant of Life and Death, tho the Goſpel aboliſhes the Covenant of Works, yet it does at the ſame time and for the ſame reaſon greatly eſtabliſh both the deſign and the effect of it. For as by *Requiring* Repentance, it ſecures the honour and authority of the Law, (as was remark'd before,) ſo by *accepting* Repentance, it promotes its good effect and ſucceſs, and carries on its great end, Holineſs of Life, which otherwiſe, (as the World now ſtands) could never be obtained. For the preſent Impotence of the World cannot bear ſo ſevere a Diſcipline, as that of the firſt Covenant, which ſince Men could not exactly keep, they would not care how much they did tranſgreſs. For what incouragement is there to ſet about ſuch a thing as a good Life under a Law that is impoſſible to be kept, and that allows no room for Repentance where 'tis not kept? The moſt immediate conſequence of this, is to make Men careleſs and deſperate: But now the Goſpel at once *requiring*

requiring and *accepting* Repentance, affords Men all the incouragement in the World, to repent and live well, ſince they cannot be pardoned ſaved without it, and may with it; ſince 'tis neither a thing *ſuperfluous*, nor in *vain* to *Repent*. And herein lies the *great Myſtery* of *Godlineſs*, the Myſterious Contrivance of the Goſpel, for the promotion of good Life, effecting that by its indulgence, which the Law could not do by its Rigor; according to that of the Pſalmiſt, *There is Mercy with thee that thou mighteſt be feared.* So that when the whole account is caſt up, the Law is rather a Gainer than a Loſer by the lenity of the Goſpel, by that Pardon which it indulges to Penitent Offenders; eſpecially conſidering, that the poſſibility of this pardon upon Repentance, was procured by the Death and Satisfaction of Chriſt, whoſe alone Suferings, were a greater Juſtification and Vindication of the Law, than all the Sins of the whole World were a deſecration of it, and did it infinitely more Honour, than if Man had either exactly kept it, or eternally ſuffered for the violation of it: So greatly is the Law eſtabliſhed by the Goſpel, even in thoſe Two parts of it, wherein it ſeems to have recieved the greateſt Damage, *viz.* in reſpect

reſpect of the *Ceremonial* part, and as 'tis a *Covenant* of Life and Death.

But *3dly*, 'Tis yet more eſtabliſhed as 'tis a Rule of Life and Manners. Here the Goſpel does more abundantly ſtrengthen and confirm the Law, by repeating and renewing its Precepts, by giving them a freſh Promulgation, and ſtamping them with the impreſs of a greater Authority, by clearing and improving the ſenſe and obligation of them, by adding to it new expreſs Precepts of its own, ſuch as that of Poverty of Spirit, Purity of Heart, the Love of Enemies, the Duties of Mortification and Self-denial, and the like; and laſtly, by inforcing both the old and new Precepts, by more powerful and awakening Sanctions, by better Promiſes, and by Severer Threatnings, and by a greater evidence and aſſurance of both, as bringing that Life and Immortality to light, which before was under great Darkneſs and Obſcurity, and which either Men did not heartily and fully believe, or upon very uncertain and unſatisfying Principles. In all which reſpects, the Goſpel is the greateſt Eſtabliſhment of the Law; Chriſt ſuſtains and holds up the Hands of *Moſes*, and *Chriſtianity* is ſo far from being againſt *Morality*, that 'tis the greateſt Improvement of it.

I have hitherto argued againſt the Voidance, and for the Eſtabliſhment of the Law upon rational Principles, and in a more abſtract way of Diſcourſe; but if you would have a more *ſenſible* Argument, and that is more of a Level with a popular Capacity, I conſider, that to be ſure Chriſt underſtood his own Religion (there is no doubt of that,) he knew the full extent of his undertaking for the World, and the utmoſt effect of his Death and Paſſion, and conſequently how far we are freed by it from the obligation of the Law, and yet he tells us expreſly, that he *came not to deſtroy the Law, but to fulfill it*, Mat. 5. 17. And accordingly to him that asked him what he ſhould do to have Eternal Life, his anſwer was, *if thou wilt enter into Life, keep the Commandments*, Mat. 17. 17. And again, to another that put him to the ſame queſtion, ſays he, *What is written in the Law? How readeſt thou?* Luke 10. 26. You ſee he refers him to the Law, to that Old (and as ſome fancy *Superannuated*) thing the Law, as that which was ſtill in force, and neceſſary to be conſcientiouſly kept and obey'd, in order to Eternal Life. So that if we will take an Idea of *Chriſtianity* from him who beſt underſtood it, the Bleſſed Author of it, there is not that difference between that and *Morality*, which ſome imagin.

From

From the Meaſures laid down, we may now in few Words, form an exact Anſwer to that *great Queſtion*, in giving an account of which, thoſe that treat of it are generally ſo voluminous, and ſo intricate; namely, *How far the Goſpel is an Abatement, and how far an Improvement of the Law?*

'Tis a groſs miſtake to think that the eaſe and advantage of Chriſtianity conſiſts in having any Abatements of *Moral* Duty; ſo far from that, that the Goſpel as a Rule of Life is the ſeverer Inſtitution of the Two, as being a more perfect and excellent Law. The Abatement therefore does not lie here, in the Goſpel conſider'd as a *Rule* of Life, but in the Goſpel conſider'd as a *Covenant* of Life and Death, which abates juſt ſo much from the Rigor of the firſt Covenant, as Repentance is leſs than exact Obedience; which exact Obedience tho the Goſpel ſtill exacts as a *Duty*, (for otherwiſe the coming ſhort of it, would be no Sin,) yet it does not exact as the *Condition* of Eternal Life: So that in ſhort, the Goſpel as a Covenant, is an Abatement; as a Rule 'tis an improvement of the Law. But in nither Senſe an Evacuation, but rather an Eſtabliſhment of it.

I ſhall now in ſhort, make a practical application of what has been diſcours'd, which I ſhall direct

Firſt, To all Chriſtians in general.

Secondly, to the Publick Profeſſors and Teachers of Chriſtianity.

Firſt, To all Chriſtians in general. That ſince the Faith of Chriſt does not make void, but rather eſtabliſh the Law, they would take care how they entertain ſuch a notion of Chriſtianity, as to think it a *Charta* of *Licentiouſneſs*, and a Diſcharge from the Duties of Morality; that they would not look upon themſelves as Exempt and Priviledg'd Perſons, above Law and Obligation, but as Perſons under a very ſtrict and ſevere Inſtitution, that requires all Purity of Heart, and Holineſs of Life. That they would not flatter themſelves with fond conceits of God's particular Favour to their *Perſons*, without reſpect to their *Lives*, nor truſt to an empty and notional Faith in Chriſt, but rather apply themſelves to live in obedience to his Commands, and to walk as becomes his Goſpel. That as they are zealous in ſtanding faſt in that *Liberty* wherein Chriſt has really made them free, ſo they would ſhew the ſame zeal in ſtanding faſt in the *Duty*, and thoſe Moral

Moral Obligations wherein Chriſt has left them *bound*; yea, and has bound faſter upon them, ever remembring that of the Author to the *Hebrews* concerning Chriſt, that he is *become the Author of Eternal Salvation*; not to thoſe that apprehend him, apply him, cloſe with him, and roll upon him (according to the unſcriptural and unintelligible Cant of ſome Men's Divinity,) but *to thoſe that Obey him*, Heb. 5. 9.

Secondly, That which hence offers it as applicable to all the publick Profeſſors and Teachers of Chriſtianity is this, that they would make it their Endeavour in the Firſt place, to form in their own Minds a clear and diſtinct Notion concerning Chriſtianity in general, and the terms of the New Covenant. That they would get a right general Idea of the Goſpel, what it is in it ſelf, and how it differs from the Law; what are its Abatements, and what its Improvements.

And after they have duly inform'd themſelves, that they would make it their next great care to inſtruct thoſe committed to their charge in this ſo weighty and Fundamental a point of Divinity. As for the *particular* diſputes of Religion, I think 'tis no great matter how little common People are troubled with them; but ſure there

there cannot be too much care taken in making them underſtand the general nature and deſign of Chriſtianity, and the true difference between the Law and the Goſpel, the Old Covenant and the New, the Covenant of Works, and the Covenant of Grace. And leſt the Indulgence which the *Latter*, even in its very *Name* imports, ſhould raiſe in them a falſe Idea of Licentiouſneſs, great care ſhould be taken ſo to ſtate and explain the *Grace* of the Goſpel, that it may not make void the Moral Duties of the Law, and to preſs and inculcate the neceſſity of Repentance and good Life, as that which the Goſpel both *commands* as a *Duty*, and *requires* as the neceſſary indiſpenſable *Condition* of Pardon and Salvation.

The empty notional way of Preaching up the Doctrins of Faith in Chriſt, Juſtification by Faith only, Free Grace, Chriſtian Liberty, and Imputed Righteouſneſs, as 'twas in uſe in the late times, and is ſtill among the Men of that ſtamp, has done a great deal of Miſchief in this Kingdom, and has had (I doubt not) an ill effect upon the Lives of Men, and contributing as much as any one thing to the unmoralizing and debauching the Age. And as it has been of an ill influence *within* our ſelves, ſo I doubt not but that it has done

done as much miſchief *without* too, and has been a general prejudice to the intereſt of *Chriſtendom*. The Learned *Epiſcopius* (I remember) reckons it as one of the Bars to the *Jews* Converſion; to which I add, and to the Heathens too: For what advantage would either Jew or Gentile gain by embracing Chriſtianity, if they muſt part with their Morality in the Exchange? This certainly is the moſt proper and obvious ſenſe, *to make void the Law through Faith*. For if good Works are not neceſſary as the condition of my Pardon and Juſtification, for what are they neceſſary? And if they are not neceſſary at all, what reaſon has any Man to trouble himſelf about them?

Decauſis Incredulitatis Judæorum, Pag. 437.

I ſhall not at preſent ingage in that long nauſeous Diſpute about *Juſtification*, but ſhall rather offer ſuch a Remark, as may quickly put an end to it. I conſider therefore, that without all queſtion our Juſtification in this Life muſt proceed by the very ſame Meaſures that it will do at the laſt Day, when we ſhall publickly receive it from the Mouth of our Judge. But then I think the great Queſtion will be, how we have *Lived*, and what we have *done* in the Body, whether Good or Bad; and as we ſhall be able to anſwer to this

Queſtion, ſo we ſhall be either finally *Juſtified* or *Condemn'd*. He therefore Preaches Chriſt beſt, that inſiſts moſt upon the neceſſity of Obedience to his Commands; and he makes the beſt *Chriſtians*, that makes the beſt *Men*; and then is the *Goſpel* moſt truly repreſented, when it is ſo ſet forth, as to be an Eſtabliſhment of the *Law*.

Now to God the Father, &c.

A

DISCOURSE

CONCERNING

The Origin and the Relief of all Trouble and Uneaſineſs of Mind.

Pſal. 94. 19.

In the Multitude of my Thoughts within me, thy Comforts delight my Soul.

AND 'tis well for the Soul of Man, that ſhe has Divine Comforts to take hold of for her Support, when all Human and Worldly Satisfactions fail, that ſhe can delight and ſolace her ſelf in God, when weary of her ſelf and of her own Thoughts, and can fix and repoſe the whole endeavour of her Being, upon a firm

and immoveable Center, when no longer able to ſuſtain the weight of her own Deſire. For were it not for this great *Sanctuary* of Human Nature, that Power of Thinking, which we value as the Priviledge of Man, would be to him an Inſtrument of the greateſt Torment and Miſery; the Wiſe Man might deſervedly envy the happineſs of the Fool, and a *Beaſt* that grazes in the Field, would be in a better condition than *both*.

Indeed our Thoughts are the occaſion of much Trouble to us, as well as Delight; and as all Honour is attended with its proper Burthen, that which is the Priviledge of our Nature, is often the Inſtrument of our Diſquiet, and our great Exaltation above the Beaſts, makes us liable to ſeveral uneaſineſſes, from which the lowneſs of their Condition exempts them. They feel only the weight of *Preſent Evil*, and of Preſent Evils, the only one that they labour under, is *Pain*, (for I think 'twould be too great a Conceſſion of Reaſon in them, to allow them capable of *Grief* of *Mind*;) and in *Pain*, all that they indure, is the direct impreſſion, without adding to their Miſery, by making impatient Reflections upon what they ſuffer. Whereas Man by the Advantage ſhall I ſay, or by the Mis-

Misfortune of a quicker and more active Senſe, torments himſelf both with troubleſome Reflections upon what *has* been, and with jealous Apprehenſions and Expectations of what *may* be, and ſo feels Evils when they are paſt and gone, and when they are preſent; and is beſides liable to Grief of Mind, as well as to Bodily Pain, and is withal ſo unkind to himſelf, as to aggravate both theſe by cloſe Reflections and paſſionate Applications of Spirit. So ſevere is the Tax that Nature charges upon Man for his Priviledge above the Beaſts.

And as this is the caſe of *Man* in reſpect of *Brute* Creatures, ſo in proportion, the ſame is alſo the caſe of *Wiſe* Men with reſpect to *Fools* and Perſons of leſs Diſcernment. 'Tis a thing of common Obſervation and Experience, that Thinking and Contemplative Men, are very apt to be Melancholy; to which agrees that Reflection of the Wiſe Preacher, *In much Wiſdom is much Grief, and he that increaſes Knowledge, increaſes Sorrow.* Eccl. 1. 18. And there is a very ſatisfying Account to be given of this: The Foundation of that Content and Complacency we take in the things of this World, is Error and Miſtake, (for 'tis impoſſible that vain things conſider'd as vain, ſhould

pleaſe,) and both our love to the World, and our delight in it, are purely owing to our ignorance of its Vanity: But now Wiſdom diſcovers to us the Vanity of the World, gives a Man a lively and convincing ſenſe of it, and ſo makes him uncapable of reliſhing its mean Enjoyments. The Wiſer a Man grows, the harder he will be to be pleaſed, and the fewer things he will delight in; and we find that in every Stage of our Life, as our Years and Thoughts ripen and improve, we caſt away ſeveral Diverſions as inſipid to our Maturer Sentiments, which before when we thought and underſtood leſs, afforded us great entertainment. That will ſerve to divert the Mind of a Fool, which will hardly ingage the *Notice* of a Wiſe Man; and the former will laugh extravagantly at that which from the later will hardly draw a Smile. The truth is, we out-grow our *Pleaſures* as we do our *Cloaths*, and the Objects of our Delight and Complacency, leſſen and decreaſe, as we improve in Reaſon and Experience, which by diſcovering to us more and more of the World's Vanity, makes us more and more Dead to it, and out of Love with it.

It does ſo; but in the mean while, what are we Gainers by the Bargain? We are indeed awaken'd, but 'tis from a pleaſant Dream;

Dream; our Eyes are opened, but 'tis to diſcern our *Nakedneſs*; we are wiſe to our own Coſt, and are by our greater *Knowledge* robb'd of our *Content*. That which prop'd up and ſuſtained our Souls before, now fails and ſinks under us, and leaves us longing and reaching, and with pain hanging in a vaſt Emptineſs. And what a ſtrange fall of the Soul muſt this be, when all her Worldly Props and Stays are taken away under her, and ſhe has nothing left to repoſe her ſelf on, and take Pleaſure in! What a horrible Hunger, what an Deprivation, what a Poyerty, what a Deſolation, what a diſmal Solitude, what an Annihilation muſt there needs inſue, ſomething like that of *Death*, which breaks off all the ties of the Soul to the Creation, and ſeparates her from all delightſom intercourſe, with ſenſible Objects! And what a miſerable ſtate of Barrenneſs and Privation muſt this be, and what ſhall the Thoughtful and Contemplative Man do in ſuch a wild Emptineſs? The whole Creation fails and ſinks urder him, and he is not able to be his own Center, he muſt then ſink down too into the depths of Sorrow and Deſpair, without Remedy or Hope of it, and be of all the Creatures upon the Earth the moſt miſerable (and that for no other fault, but for being more Wiſe and Diſcerning.)

Were it not that there is a God to ſupply the defect of the Creature, were it not that he could reſt the weight of his Soul upon him, when his other Props are withdrawn from him, were it not that he could take Sanctuary in the Divine Fullneſs, when his more intent Thoughts have utterly convinc'd him of the World's Emptineſs, and were able to ſay here with the Pſalmiſt, *In the Multitude of my Thoughts within me, thy Comforts delight my Soul.*

We have in the Words the *Original* and the *Cure* of all the Sadneſs and Melancholy that is in the World. The Original of all Human Sorrow is our own Thoughtfulneſs, or the multitude of our Thoughts. The Cure and Remedy for this, is the Conſolation of God, or the Divine Comforts; for *In the Multitude of my Thoughts without me, thy Comforts delight my Soul*; wherein the Pſalmiſt may be ſuppoſed to ſpeak to this effect, When my Blood and Spirits, thoſe Natural *Springs* of the Soul, are ſtrongly touch'd and mightily ſet on work by ſenſible Impreſſions, and my Mind by reaſon of their quick and various Motion, ſallies out into a multitude of Thoughts; and when thoſe Thoughts make me ſad and heavy, anxious and ſolicitous, as preſenting to my view my own weakneſs and infirmity, and the univerſal vanity

vanity of all thoſe ſeeming Props and Stays upon which my deluded Soul was apt to lean, the many great Calamities of *Life*, and the much greater Terrors of *Death*, the known Miſeries of the *Preſent* State, and the Darkneſs and uncertainty of the *Future*, ſtill urging me with freſh Arguments of Sorrow, and opening new and new Scenes of Melancholy, till my Soul begins to faint and ſink under the Burthen ſhe has laid upon her ſelf: When I am thus *Thoughtful*, and thus *Sorrowful*, have thought my ſelf into a penſive frame of Spirit, and looked ſo long againſt the Light, as to darken and benight my Mind, then it is O my God, that I feel the relief of thy Divine Refreſhments, and find my ſelf ſupported and born up by the ſtrong Tide of thy Suavities and Conſolations, and revived by freſh Incomes of Life, which raiſe up my drooping Head, ſtrike a Light in my Soul, and make me not only *diſmiſs*, but even *forget* that Sorrow and Melancholy which my Thoughtfulneſs had brought upon me. So that here are two great and very important Concernments of Man pointed out and deſcrib'd, the true *Cauſe*, and the only *Remedy* of all his Sorrow: The Cauſe within himſelf, his own Thoughts; the Remedy in God, the Divine Comforts.

And

And Firſt, to begin with the Cauſe of Human Sorrow, our own Thoughtfulneſs, or the Multitude of our Thoughts within us. But here it is firſt of all ſuppoſed, that Man is a Thoughtful Creature, and has a multitude of Thoughts that paſs within him; and ſo indeed he has: Thoughtfulneſs is inſeparable at leaſt from a *waking* Soul, 'tis at once the Priviledge and the Diſeaſe of it, and there is no Man but who thinks a great deal, tho there be but a very few that think to any great purpoſe. The Spirit of Man is called in Scripture, *The Candle of the Lord*, and this Candle always burns, and flames and ſhines. It may well be compared to a Luminary, being a moſt active, reſtleſs Principle, and that is in ſuch an high and conſtant Ferment, that to ſtop its Motion, you muſt extinguiſh its Light; for as long as this Candle is *alive*, it will burn and flame, and caſt a Sphere of Light about it; for Thought riſes upon Thought, and Deſire upon Deſire, Hope after Hope, and Fear after Fear, and theſe follow one another in an endleſs chaſe, ſo imitating the rapid courſe and agitation, and the conſtant flux and ſucceſſion of a *Flame*.

And this is no other than the Natural reſult of the make and frame of Man. For ſince

ſince to the Power and Capacity of Thinking, Man has added an actual inclination to *Happineſs*, 'tis but neceſſary that this his Inclination to Happineſs ſhould ſet his Thoughts on work, and imploy them in contriving means whereby this Happineſs may be attained. Hang but a weight upon a Clock that has the due inward compoſure of Springs and Wheels, and it will immediatley put it into Motion. Now the Power and Capacity of Thinking in Man, anſwers to the inner Compoſure of the Clock, theſe are the Intellectual Springs and Wheels, and the inclination to Happineſs anſwers to the Weight that is hanged on it, and gives it actual motion. So that the general deſire of Happineſs being added to a Creature that has already all the Power and Capacity of Thinking, makes him think actually after the ſame manner, as the weight upon a Clock, whoſe Springs and Wheels are duly order'd and diſpoſed for motion, immediately ſets it a going. Here is the firſt Principle of all that infinite motion that is in the Soul of Man, it all derives it ſelf from this one Fountain, the general deſire of Happineſs; were it not for which, there would be an univerſal Reſt and Silence throughout the Soul, the intellectual frame would ſtand ſtill, as a Clock does when its Weghtsare taken off:

off: But as long as this Weight preſſes, the Motion continues. For indeed the general deſire of Happineſs is the proper weight of the Soul, the great *Arterial Pulſe* of Human Nature, that awakens and ſtirs up its Dormant Powers, and quickens the whole Rational frame into Life and Motion.

And accordingly if we reflect upon what paſſes within our ſelves, we ſhall find that all thoſe infinite workings of the Soul, thoſe innumerable Thoughts, Imaginations, Remembrances, Willings, Hatings, Deſirings and Averſations, Hopes, Fears, Joys and Sorrows that croſs and cut one another in endleſs *Rencounters*; in a Word, that the whole motion of the Soul is nothing elſe but one general Concern, one various *Thought* about Happineſs. This is the Reſult of all that paſſes within the Soul, hither all her Motions and Operations tend, which is a plain ſign that 'tis this that firſt ſets her on work, and is the principle of all her Motion. And indeed how can it otherwiſe be, but that the deſire of Happineſs which is the natural Bias of every Soul, ſhould beget and excite in us a Thoughtfulneſs concerning it, and the Means whereby it may be attained?

But altho our Thoughts take their firſt and neceſſary Riſe from the natural deſire of Happineſs,

Happineſs, as a Clock does its motion from the weight that hangs on it, yet ſo far do they degenerate from their *Original*, as to be themſelves the cauſe of all our Miſery. For the whole Miſery of Man is reſolvible into *Pain* and *Grief*, and both theſe are cauſed by our Thoughts. As for *Pain*, 'tis certain that 'tis the Soul alone that feels it, (as being the true ſeat of all Senſation,) and that 'tis by its *Thoughtfulneſs* that it does ſo; for indeed Pain it ſelf is nothing elſe but a diſagreeable Modification of the Soul, an *uneaſie Thought* occaſioned by ſome outward Bodily impreſſion: But that is only the remote occaſion, 'tis to our Thinking that we directly owe all our Pain. For let the impreſſion made upon the Body be never ſo dolorifick or apt to excite Pain, yet if you will ſuppoſe the Soul either not to think at all, or to have its Attention wholly withdrawn from the ſuppoſed impreſſion, and intirely fix'd and ingaged upon ſome other Object, there will be no ſuch thing as that troubleſom ſenſation we call *Pain*; as by experience we find in Men that either are in a deep Sleep that wholly *ſilences* their Thoughts, or in a Trance or Extaſie that ſtrongly *diverts* them. Accordingly we have Two Methods of dealing with Men in Pain, either by caſting them into a deep

deep Sleep or Stupor, or by what we call *Divertiſement*; by which it clearly appears, that our Thinking is the true cauſe of all our Pain. As it is alſo

Secondly, Of all our *Grief*. 'Tis I confeſs ſtrange, that the Soul of Man which ſo infinitely loves it ſelf, and whoſe whole Inclination is to *Happineſs*, ſhould be its own Tormentor; and yet 'tis moſt certain, that all thoſe innumerable Troubles and Diſquiets whereby her natural Reſt and Tranquility is broken and diſturb'd, ariſe from her own Thoughts. As theſe will be the Hell of Wicked Spirits hereafter, ſo they are the preſent Rack and Affliction of the Soul here, and all the uneaſineſs that ſhe either feels and complains of in her ſelf, or pities in others, is derived from them. For indeed our Joy and our Grief as contrary as they are, both in themſelves, and in their effects, proceed from one and the ſame general Principle, and are like Two *Grafts* of a contrary kind that grow upon one and the ſame *Stock*; they are both born within our ſelves, and proceed from our *Thoughts*.

From whence elſe ſhould our Grief proceed? It cannot come from any thing *without* the Soul, for that which is without the Soul, cannot act upon it, conſequently cannot any wiſe affect it, and conſequently cannot

cannot grieve or puniſh it. It muſt be therefore from ſomething *within* the Soul, and what can that be, but her own *Thoughts*? Theſe therefore are the Inſtruments of her Diſquiet; nothing of all that is either thought, ſaid or done in the World, can have any direct and immediate influence upon my Soul; ſhe can only ſuffer by her own Thoughts. The Thought of other Men may indeed impreſs certain Motions upon their *own Bodies*, and thoſe Motions may be communicated to *other* Bodies, and this may work a change in external Nature; but what is all this to *my Mind*? And ſo again the Words and Actions of Men, may make an alteration either in the Political or the Natural ſtate of things, but ſtill how is *my Mind* concern'd in all this, any otherwiſe than as ſhe is pleaſed to intereſt her ſelf in it, and to take an occaſion from this to vex and afflict her ſelf by her own Thought, by thoſe uneaſie Reflections ſhe paſſes upon either the *Motions* of the *Natural*, or the *Events* of the *Moral* World. This is that which truly wounds and pierces her, all other things drop ſhort and cannot reach her.

But to let in a little more light upon this, by an *Inſtance*; Suppoſe I hear of ſome ill Report concerning me, ſomething ſpoken to my diſadvantage; 'tis moſt certain

tain that this is a thing wholly without me, and intirely ſeparated from me, and therefore of it ſelf can have no manner of effect upon me, ſo as to make me really better or worſe, more happy or more miſerable; how comes it to paſs then, that I am troubled at ſuch a Report? What does the Report do to me, or upon me? Does it of it-ſelf immediately and directly wound or hurt my Soul? No, it does not ſo much as touch it, as being altogether without it, and ſeparate from it. How then come I to be diſturb'd about it, but only becauſe tho that be really ſeparate from me, yet my Soul fantaſtically joins with it, and by a falſe imagination, takes it for a real evil, and ſo diſturbs her ſelf with her own Fancy. The thing in it ſelf can be no real evil to my Soul, becauſe 'tis without me, and I am not really the worſe for it; but I give it the Appearance of an evil, and make an *imaginary union* with it in my own fancy, and ſo vex and diſcompoſe my ſelf: So that 'tis not the ill Report that goes concerning me, but my *Fantaſtical Opinion* about it, that gives the Trouble and the Diſturbance. And the like may be conceived in all other caſes. We may lay the Blame, and we generally do, upon things without, upon this or that Affront, or this or that croſs Acci-

dent,

dent, but upon due examination it will be found, that we muſt come nearer home for the Authors of our Diſcontent, and that they that trouble us are of our own Family, and are no other than our own Thoughts. So that now if a Man ſhould put himſelf that Queſtion of the Pſalmiſt, *Why art thou ſo troubled, O my Soul, and why art thou ſo diſquieted within me?* The Anſwer is ready, thy Trouble is from thy ſelf, they are thy own Thoughts that diſquiet thee.

And having thus opened the true Fountain of all our grief and uneaſineſs, I come now to apply the *Remedy*, which we need not go far to ſeek, ſince the very next Clauſe of the Text directs us to it. And 'tis a Remedy that is as near us as the Diſeaſe, *for in the Multitude of my Thoughts within me, thy Comforts delight my Soul.* When my own Thoughts trouble and diſcompoſe me, then thy Comforts refreſh and relieve me. So that the Divine Comforts are the proper Cure and Remedy of all that Sadneſs and diſcompoſure of Mind, which is occaſion'd by our own Thoughts: The *Divine Comforts*; by which I ſuppoſe we may aptly enough underſtand theſe Three things;

1. The Chearing and Refreſhing influences of the Holy Spirit.

2. The Joys and Satisfactions of Devotion, and a Religious Life.

3. The Conſiderations of the Nature and Perfections of God.

All theſe I think may very properly come within the notion of *Divine Comforts*, as being either ſuch as proceed directly from God, or which reſult from the Service we do to him, or which ſpring from the Thoughts and Contemplations we exerciſe about him. Theſe are indeed very Divine Comforts, and ſuch as will not fail to give us eaſe and refreſhment under the moſt cleaving and tormenting Troubles our Thoughts can inflict upon us.

As Firſt of all, to begin with the Firſt Kind of Divine Comforts, the Chearing and refreſhing influences of the Holy Spirit, who in Scripture is emphatically ſtiled *the Comforter*; Joh. 15. 26. Gal. 5. 22. and one of whoſe principal and immediate Fruits is Joy. We have no reaſon to think any Trouble of our Minds ſo great, but what theſe Comforts of God will be able to allay: For this is that Divine Conſolation, that internal and unexpreſſible Sweetneſs and Delectation, that Myſtical Unction, that Spiritual Taſte, that

that Intellectual Savour, that Refectory Grace, that inebriating Wine, that Extatical Joy of the Holy Ghoſt; in a Word, that Peace of God which paſſes all Underſtanding, and, that Bleſſed Anticipation of Heavenly Delights, which has ſo fill'd, overflow'd and raviſh'd ſome Holy Souls, as to raiſe them above the World and themſelves too, to make them quite inſenſible of all Pain and Sorrow, and to deſpiſe all the Good and all the Evil of this Life. Of this ſome Solitary and Contemplative Perſons have *ſpoken* very high and great things; and others of leſs Thought, but more Piety and Devotion, have *felt* greater: Witneſs that ſtrange and otherwiſe unaccountable Appearance, the Chearful and Serene Behaviour of ſeveral old *Martyrs* in the midſt of the Flames, who were ſo far from expreſſing any Impatience in their *Fiery Tryals*, that they were not ſo much as ſenſible of any *Pain*. We cannot here ſuppoſe that the Power of God miraculouſly reſtrain'd that of the Fire, (as in the caſe of the Three Children,) becauſe it had its uſual Effect upon their Bodies; nor have we any need to ſuppoſe that the ordinary Law of Communication between ſuch certain Motions upon the Body, and ſuch ſenſations in the Soul, was by the Power of God miraculouſly interrupted: No, The account of

this matter will be more ſimple; and conſequently more probable to ſuppoſe, that the Holy Spirit of God (the great *Comforter*,) did diffuſe ſuch a Divine Sweetneſs through the Souls of thoſe happy Sufferers (if thoſe that felt nothing may be ſo called,) as either ſo withdrew their Attention from the Impreſſions made upon them, that they had no ſuch thing as any dolorous Senſation, or ſo temper'd and qualified it, or rather outweigh'd it by a ſtronger ſentiment of *Pleaſure*, that it was not in the leaſt uneaſie to them; that is, in one Word, it either *hinder'd* it, or *overcame* it. To ſuch an high degree are the Divine Conſolations able to delight the Soul, when God is pleaſed more liberally to diſpenſe them. Of theſe the Pſalmiſt may be ſuppoſed to ſpeak, when he ſays, *Pſal.* 23. *The Lord is my Shepherd, therefore can I lack nothing. He ſhall feed me in a green Paſture, and lead me forth beſide the Waters of Comfort, Yea, though I walk through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, I will fear no Evil, for thou art with me, thy Rod and thy Staff ſhall comfort me.* It ſeems in the ſtrength of theſe Heavenly Refreſhments, he could tread the moſt diſmal and uncomfortable Path the Feet of Man can ever walk in, the *Valley of the ſhadow of Death*, without any concern or trouble. And indeed one Beam of this

Divine

Divine Conſolation, would ſtrike a light into the ſhades below; brighten the Minds of the Infernal Spirits, and make even the Damn'd in Hell forget their Miſeries. But theſe Divine Comforts being more rare and extraordinary, and ſuch as are not ſo much at our own Diſpoſal, as being immediate Communications of God, I ſhall proceed to thoſe that are more within our own Power, and therefore haſten to conſider,

2. The Joys and Satisfactions of Devotion, and a Religious Life: By which may be underſtood either that Pleaſure wherewith a good Man *does* his Duty, performs acts of Piety and Religion, or that Pleaſure wherewith he reflects upon it when done. The former is the pleaſure of the *Action*, the latter is the pleaſure of the *Review*, and is the ſame with what we call the Comfort of a good *Conſcience*; and both theſe are very great and ſtrong Pleaſures, far beyond thoſe of Senſe, which ſo captivate and inſlave Mankind. 'Tis firſt a great Pleaſure for a Man to do his Duty; he is then in a moſt natural ſtate and order, and upon his moſt natural ſtate and order, and upon his moſt natural Employment, doing that which beſt becomes him, is moſt perfective of his true ſelf, and moſt ſuitable to the original genius and conſtitution of his Soul, which is then well in

Tune, and in a right ſtate of *Health*, from which Pleaſure is always inſeparable. And ſo Secondly, 'tis a great pleaſure for a Man to reflect upon his Duty done; 'tis to conſider and recollect with himſelf, that he has made a right uſe of his Powers and Faculties, that he has acted as he ought, and lived according to the Order and Perfection of his Nature, and that thereby he has ingaged the beſt and greateſt Being on his ſide, made God his Friend, and ſecured his main Point, the intereſt of his Soul to all Eternity; than which, what can be a more pleaſing and more ſatisfying conſideration? Of the former Pleaſure, that of doing acts of Religion, we may from a general conjecture from what the Pſalmiſt ſays of one of them in particular, *My Soul ſhall be ſatisfied even as it were with Marrow and Fatneſs, when my Mouth praiſes thee with joyful Lips*, Pſal. 63. 6. The Figure is ſtrangely bold, and the Expreſſion ſtrong and flaming, importing a ſort of Spiritual Luxury, an intellectual Senſuality in the Service of God. Of the latter pleaſure, that of reflecting upon our Duty performed, we may take an account from that of *Solomon*, Prov. 14. 14. *A good Man ſhall be ſatisfied from himſelf*; and from that of St. *Paul*, 2 Cor. 1. 12. *Our Rejoycing is this, the Teſtemony of our Conſcience, that in Simplicity*

Simplicity and Godly Sincerity, we have had our Converſation in the World. And 'tis conſiderable that he ſpeaks it after an account of ſome very extraordinary Troubles that came upon him in *Aſia*, and makes this very thing to be that which ſupported him under them, and to be the very Comfort and Conſolation of God. For ſays he, *Bleſſed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the Father of Mercies, and the God of all Comfort; who comforteth us in all our Tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any Trouble, by the Comfort wherewith we our ſelves are comforted of God.* Then a little after, *For we would not Brethren have you ignorant of our Trouble which came to us in* Aſia, *that we were preſſed out of Meaſure above ſtrength, inſomuch that we deſpaired of Life. But we had the Sentence of Death in our ſelves, that we ſhould not truſt in our ſelves, but in God which raiſes the Dead; who deliver'd us from ſo great a Death.* Then a little after adds, as expreſſing the manner and means of his Deliverance, *For our Rejoycing is this, The Teſtimony of our Conſcience*, &c. This it ſeems was the Comfort whereby he was comforted of God, and which held him up under, or rather *above his Trouble.* Here then is another Remedy of Grief, another Sanctuary for a troubled

and diſconſolate Soul. When Thoughts ariſe in thy Heart, and Troubles from thoſe Thoughts, when thy Mind is dark and Cloudy, and all the Regions of thy Soul are overcaſt, then betake thy ſelf to thy *Oratory*, either to thy *Cloſet*, or to the *Church*, and entertain thy Soul with the Pleaſures of Religion, and the Satisfactions of a clear Conſcience, which will at leaſt divert, if not wholly deliver thee from thy Trouble: So that in this Senſe alſo thou ſhalt find the Service of God to be *perfect Freedom*. But in caſe thy Trouble be very obſtinate and difficult to be turn'd out of its courſe, then make uſe of the laſt and moſt efficacious Remedy, and apply thy ſelf

3. To the conſideration of the Nature and Perfections of God. The Pſalmiſt had often tried this Expedient, and as often found the ſucceſs of it, and therefore as one convinc'd and ſatisfied of its efficacy, ſays he, *When I am in heavineſs, I will think upon God*, Pſal. 77. 3. This indeed is a moſt comfortable Contemplation to a Mind that ſhall be duly diſpoſed for it, and ſuch as will either remove or ſwallow up all the diſquiet that other Conſiderations can bring upon us, all the Trouble that can ariſe from the whole compaſs of Thought.

As for inſtance, when in the Multitude of my Thoughts within me, I happen to fall into that *Carteſian* Doubt and Perplexity, that it may be there is an infinitely Powerful, Envious, Subtle and Crafty Being, that makes it his buſineſs to put Cheats and Fallacies upon me; and that it may be, I am ſo made and conſtituted in my natural frame, as to be then moſt deceived, when I apprehend and conceive things moſt clearly and diſtinctly, and conſequently that there is no ſuch thing as *Truth*, *Knowledge* or *Certainty* to be had; then I conſult and contemplate the Idea and Nature of God, which I find to include infinite Perfection, wherein is alſo included Goodneſs, Truth and Veracity; whence I collect, that he is a Being infinitely Good, and infinitely True, and the Fountain of all Light and Knowledge, and that therefore he can no more be the Author of an Error in me, than he can be ſubject to any in himſelf; which preſently puts an end to this Scruple.

Again, When my Thoughts repreſent to me in my Retirements, a true Idea of this World, and of the whole ſtate of Man in it, that they are both of them extreamly vain, yea, *altogether Vanity*; when I conſider the utter Emptineſs, Nullity and Diſappointment of all Worldly Fruition, and

and am troubled to ſee the many little props and ſtays of my Soul upon which I formerly rely'd, to yield to my Weight, and ſink away ſo faſt under me, and not only ſo, but am thence drawn into a Melancholy Suſpicion that it may be this is the nature of *all fruition*, and that it will be ſo in the other ſtate too, when I come to enjoy it, and ſo begin to have the ſame doubt now concerng *Good*, which, I had before concerning *Truth*; I ſay, when my Thoughts have caſt me into this Damp and Perplexity, then I turn the Stream of them another way, and meditate upon the infinite Richneſs, Fulneſs and All-ſufficiency of God, that *Centrality* of the Divine Nature, whereby he is fully ſatisfied in himſelf, and capable of being an object of Acquieſcence to as many as ſhall have the fruition of him; which one thing duly conſider'd, will both ſupport me under the Thought of the *preſent* World's Vanity, and eaſe me of all Suſpicions concerning the *next*.

Again, When in my more melancholly and gloomy Hours, among the Multitude of my Sadder Thoughts, this is one, that Men are not dealt with according to their Works good or evil, but that there are more *hidden* Cauſes of Mens eternal Conditions, that ſome are from all Eternity mark'd

mark'd out for Ruin by the abſolute Will of God, and that I my ſelf am one of thoſe Miſerable Reprobates, abſolutely rejected from *Grace* and *Glory*; when this black Thought begins to o'recaſt my Soul, and draw over it a Veil of Darkneſs and Deſpair, then I conſider the breadth and length, the depth and height of the Goodneſs of God, and that Love of his that paſſes Knowledge, how Great and Generous a Being he is, how ſlow to Anger, and how abundant in Goodneſs and Truth, how infinitely remov'd from Envy, Malice, Prejudice and all ſtraitneſs of Mind, and all thoſe little illiberal Paſſions which make up what we call *Ill Nature*; which while I ſeriouſly and attentively conſider, I find my darken'd Soul begin to break out of her Eclipſe, to diſmiſs all her Jealous Apprehenſions of God, and her Fears concerning her ſelf, being no longer able to ſuſpect ſuch harſh and arbitrary Proceedings from ſo Great, ſo Good, and ſo juſt a Being.

And ſo again, to inſtance once more, whenever my Mind is anxious and ſolicitous about the great Power and Malice of *Evil Spirits*, ſo as to be afraid what they may do to me while I am in this World, but more eſpecially when ſeparated from the Body, I ſhall enter into

their

their more peculiar Territories, into the World of Spirits: When I am in a thoughtful concern what ſhall then become of me, and who will then take Charge of me, that I may not be either ſeiz'd and caught up by thoſe to whom I do not belong, whoſe Portion I am not, or wander and be loſt in thoſe unknown Regions, and among thoſe numberleſs Troops of Spirits, (for *what is my Soul in ſuch a Multitude of Creatures?*) then I ſet my ſelf to conſider the Power, the Wiſdom and the Providence of God, who has ſet inviolable Laws and Meaſures to both Worlds, and diſpoſes of all things ſweetly, according to thoſe Laws; who has given his Angels charge concerning us, to keep us in all our ways, and whoſe Goodneſs and Juſtice oblige him to take care of all thoſe in the next World, who truly and faithfully ſerve him in this. I recollect again with the Pſalmiſt, that *the Lord is my Shepherd*, and therefore *tho I walk through the Valley of the ſhadow of Death I will fear no evil, for thou art with me, thy Rod and thy Staff ſhall comfort me.*

And thus is the Conſideration of God improveable to the eaſe and quiet of our Minds, under the ſeveral uneaſie Sentiments that may diſcompoſe them. Nor is it only a Remedy againſt the *Pain* of our

Many

Many Thoughts, but even againſt the very *Multitude* of them too; for Multitude of Thoughts, is from Multitude of Deſires. As we Think in general, becauſe we Deſire, ſo the more things we Deſire, the more we ſhall Think of. Here then is the Head of all our Diſtraction; we think and are troubled about many things, becauſe our Deſire is divided among many Objects; And how comes our Deſires to be ſo divided, but only becauſe the *Creatures* are the Object of them. The proper Remedy then for this, will be to apply our Minds to the Contemplation of God, and the more we Contemplate him, the more we ſhall Love and Deſire him, and the more we Deſire him, the more our Thoughts will Concenter on him; and this will Recollect and *Simplify* our Souls, and free us of that Diſtraction of Mind, that Diſperſion of Thought which is ſo great an hindrance to us in the courſe of our *Studies*, in the management of our *Affairs*, but moſt of all in the Offices of our *Devotion*.

And thus have I pointed out both the Origin and the Cure of all Human Trouble, and ſhewn how in the Multitude of our Thoughts within us the Divine Comforts do delight our Souls. And 'tis they only that can do it; Miſerable are all other Comforters, and vain is all the Comfort that they adminiſter.

Nei-

Neither Philoſophick Diſcourſes, nor the common Arts of Diverſion, Muſick, Dancing, Drinking or Gaming, can afford any great or long Relief to a troubled Spirit, its weight will ſoon make way through theſe ſlight things, and indeed will never find a ſtay ſtrong enough to bear it up, till it repoſe it ſelf upon the Divine Comforts. After all Experiments, its laſt Sanctuary muſt be in *God* and *Religion*.

The Conſideration of what has been hitherto Discours'd, will now lead us to a double Reflection, one upon the Condition of Wicked Men in this World, and the other upon the Condition of Damn'd Souls in the World to come.

And Firſt as to the Condition of Wicked Men in this World. If the Divine Comforts are the proper and only Cure for all the Trouble, occaſion'd by our Thoughts, then we muſt conclude the Condition of all ſuch Men to be very Miſerable: For as their Thoughts are apt to give them moſt Trouble, as being for the moſt part irregular and full of diſorder, ſo they are the leaſt capable of being reliev'd by the Comforts of God; for as for the Spirit of Conſolation, him they have long ſince quench'd and extinguiſh'd; as for the Joys of Religion, them they underſtand

ſtand not, and are ready to Smile at the mention of them; as for the Teſtimony of Conſcience, they have either no Senſe of any ſuch thing, or ſuch as is only Tormenting and Uneaſie. Then laſtly, As for meditating upon God, either he is not in all their Thoughts, or they think on him with horrour and amazement, and are ſo far from taking any Comfort in him, that they wiſh him out of being, as their great *Objection* that chills the Fire of their Blood, damps their Humour, and is an ever-returning Check upon their Mirth and Jollity. So then they have no part nor Lot in theſe Divine Comforts, tho at the ſame time they want them moſt. This Noble Remedy is no Remedy to them, the Conſtitution of their Mind is quite croſs to it, ſo as to defeat all its Sovereign Power and Virtue. They muſt then either obſtinately bear their Trouble, or take up with Human Supports, ſeek Repoſe in their Thorns, roll themſelves from one Vanity to another, and try to fill and ſatisfy their Hungry Souls with variety of Emptineſs, with a *Multiplied nothing*.

Then Secondly, As to the Condition of Damn'd Souls in the other World, it may be conſider'd, that if now the whole Trouble of the Soul be from the inward workings of her own Thoughts, how great

great will this Trouble be, in how quick a current will it flow, when the Powers of the Soul ſhall be more awaken'd, and its Thoughts more vehemently ſet on work, as it will be in the other ſtate! God will then proceed to the higheſt actuation of the Soul, ſound an Alarum to all her Dormant Powers, and wind them up to the very pitch of Action; ſo that her whole Life ſhall be but one conſtant *ſtretch* of Thought. And what a Miſery muſt it be to the Soul, to have her Thoughts ſo mightily ſet on work, and not to have a God to reſt them on! To have her Faculties inlarged, and her Deſires increaſed, and not one Divine Comfort to imploy thoſe Faculties, or to gratifie thoſe Deſires! Never certainly will that Saying of the Wiſe Man be ſo highly verified as then, *In much Wiſdom is much Grief, and he that increaſes Knowledge, increaſes Sorrow.* The activity of the Soul will then be her great Torment, and the Multitude of her Thought will multiply her Trouble. There is nothing within the whole compaſs of intelligible Objects, but what ſhe will then think upon, and ſhe can think upon nothing but what will aggravate her Miſery, every new Thought will be a new Trouble. Whether ſhe looks within or without, backward or forward, upon Time or Eternity,

nity, upon God or the Creature, ſtill ſhe will have a moſt uncomfortable Proſpect; ſo infinite indeed are the Thoughts that will then combine to afflict her, that I ſhall not offer at an account of them; only I obſerve, that among the Multitude of her other Thoughts, the Soul will then have a true Idea, a thorough Conception far different from what ſhe has now, or can now imagin, of the utter *vanity* of the whole *Creation*; and to ſee and feel that great Prop at once fail and ſink under her, and nothing more ſolid, ſubſtituted in its room; to find her ſelf looſen'd and uncenter'd from the Creature, and not lodg'd upon God; to have no manner of Taſte or Reliſh for falſe Goods, (becauſe ſhe now ſees their Vanity,) and to be utterly deprived of the true, and ſo to lean with the full weight and ſtreſs of her Deſire upon nothing. What a Miſery, what a Hell muſt this be! 'Tis what perhaps we cannot well underſtand now, and I pray God we never may.

In this Life the Soul has always ſome Prop or other to ſtay her ſelf upon: If ſhe be not ſo well diſpoſed as to delight her ſelf in God, and reliſh his Divine Sweetneſs, then ſhe can make a ſhift to ſolace and entertain her ſelf with the *Creatures*; or if upon a clear thorough ſight of their Va-

nity, ſhe cannot find any ſatisfaction in ſuch empty Enjoyments, then ſhe can turn her ſelf to a more ſubſtantial Good, and comfort her ſelf in her *God*. But to have neither God nor Creature, to be deſtitute of both, (which is the caſe of a Damn'd Soul) none but thoſe who ſhall experiment this condition, can ever have a juſt Idea of it.

It is therefore the great Concern, and ought to be the great care of us all, ſo to govern our Thoughts here, that they may not be a Torment to us hereafter; to make ſuch a right uſe of our Intellectual Powers and Faculties now, that when they ſhall be more heighten'd and enlarged, they may have a proportionable Object to entertain them, that when we have moſt *Thoughts*, we may have moſt and beſt *Comforts*, even the infinite Conſolations of God, which will bear the *Teſt* of Thinking, and in the Multitude of our moſt elevated Thoughts will *eternally* delight our Souls.

A

DISCOURSE

OF

The Natural and Moral Union of the Soul with God, and of Perfection that accrues to it from thence.

Pſal. 73. 28.

It is good for me to draw near to God.

THE natural and inward Perfection of Human Nature bears ſo little proportion to the Capacities and Deſires of the ſame nature, and Men are withal ſo inwardly conſcious and ſenſible of this Diſproportion, between what they *are*, and what they naturally *crave* and *aſpire* to,

that they all with one general Conſent agree (like Men in a Famin,) to go out of themſelves and their own Homes, to ſeek abroad for Proviſion, to ſtrengthen their ſlender Intereſt by ſome Foreign Allie, and to unite themſelves to ſome *other* Being, for the further Perfection and Supplement of their *own*.

Thus far all Men agree *to go out of themſelves* for their Good and Happineſs: And perhaps 'tis the only thing wherein they do ſo, and you will ſcarce ever after this be able to meet with them all together again; for no ſooner are they out of themſelves, but they immediately *divide* and take ſeveral Paths; and apply themſelves to ſeveral Objects, as their Reaſon or their Senſe leads them, ſome directing their Motion towards *God*, and ſome towards the *Creature*.

Thoſe that direct their Motion towards the Creature, travel ſo thick and full, in ſuch Crouds and Companies, that they have ſcarce room to paſs in without elbowing and juſtling one another; ſo that they are ready to quarrel about the *Way* as well as the *End*; while in the mean time, thoſe that direct their Motion towards God, are ſo very *thin* and *few*, (here and there a ſtragling Paſſenger,) that did they not travel by a good Light, and were well aſſured of their way,

way, the very *ſingularity* of their Choice would be ſuch an Objection againſt it, that they would be tempted to change Roads, and be where there is moſt Company.

But *the Path of the Juſt*, (as the Wiſe Man tells us, Prov. 4. 18.) *is the ſhining Light*, a Path which like the *Milky Way* in the Heavens, diſcovers and diſtinguiſhes it ſelf by its own Brightneſs; and thoſe that travel in this Bright Shining Road, are *Children* of *Light*, of good Senſe and Underſtanding, of great Judgment, and of great Conſideration, very Wiſe, Knowing and Diſcerning Perſons. And they ſhew their Judgment by the Wiſdom of their Choice, by the Excellency of their Aim, in that they do not propoſe or endeavour an Union of themſelves with the *Creature*, (which would be but to joyn *Cypher* to *Cypher*, Vanity to Vanity, whence the Product would be *nothing*,) but with him who is their true and only Good, and whoſe Union will perfect and better their Natures. Of the number of which few Wiſe Perſons that travel in this *ſhining Path*, is the *Pſalmiſt* here in the Text, who through all the Pomp and Glitter of a Court, could ſo clearly diſcern his true Good, that he would not go out of himſelf to join himſelf with that which is as vain as himſelf; but thus expreſſes and juſtifies

his *Better* Choice, *It is for me to draw near unto God.*

To draw near unto God which; rendring is very much according to the Hebrew, and well expreſſes the ſignification of the Word קרבת in the Text. In the Septuagint it is τὸ προσκολλᾶσθαι τῷ Θεῷ, *to be glued faſt to God.* And ſo the Vulgar Latin, *Bonum eſt mihi Deo adhærere, It is good for me to adhere or ſtick cloſe to God*; which is alſo follow'd by our other Engliſh Tranſlation, *It is good for me to hold me faſt by God.* But this variety of Expreſſion, makes no material difference in the Senſe, which comes all to one at laſt, and furniſhes us with one and the ſame Matter for our Diſcourſe and Meditation. For we have here the Pſalmiſt's Choice, and the Reaſon or Juſtification of that Choice: The Choice implied, the Reaſon of it expreſt. His Choice here implied, is to be nearly and cloſely united to God; his Reaſon for it is, becauſe ſuch an Union will be for his Good, and redound to the Happineſs and Perfection of his Being. *It is good for me to draw near unto God.* But to make my Diſcourſe run the more light and eaſie, I ſhall charge it with no more than what is directly and expreſly contain'd in the Text, which will all reſolve in this ſingle Propoſition, *that the Perfection of the Soul is her*

her Union with God. For the better illuſtration of which noble and divine *Theorem*, I ſhall Firſt conſider the ſeveral ways of our Union with God, and Secondly, the Perfection that reſults from each, whereby it will evidently appear, that the Perfection of the Soul is her union with God.

And Firſt, *Of the Union of the Soul with God.* This is either Natural or Moral; Firſt, There is a *Natural* Union between God and the Soul, as indeed there is between God and every thing elſe. For if God has an infinite *Eſſence*, he muſt have alſo an infinite *Preſence*; he muſt be eſſentially every where, and if he be eſſentially preſent in all *Places*, then he muſt alſo be eſſentially preſent with all *Creatures*, conſequently with the *Soul* of Man, which muſt therefore be ſuppoſed to be ſo intimately and immediately united to him, as to have its very Being and Subſiſtence in him, according to that of the Apoſtle, *In him we live, move, and have our Being.*

God it ſeems is the *Foundation* as well as the *efficient cauſe* of our Exiſtence; and the Soul has her Being *in* God, as well as *from* him. As God penetrates and pervades *her*, ſo ſhe dwells and ſubſiſts in *God*, who is the Place of Spirits, as Space is of Bodies. Now this muſt needs infer the moſt inward and immediate Union that can poſſibly

be between Two Natures: To be more nearly united, would be to be the ſame. If God be eſſentially preſent with the Soul, and the Soul has her Being in God, then is it not a neceſſary conſequence that there is an immediate union between God and the Soul? The Apoſtle thought it ſo, who proves the very ſame Concluſion, by the very ſame Argument. *He is not far*, ſays he, *from every one of us, for in him we Live, Move, and have our Being*, Acts 17. 27, 28. He is not far from us, ſignifies as much, as that he is very near us, and that we are moſt intimately united to him. But how does the Apoſtle prove this our Union with God? Why becauſe *in him we Live, Move, and have our Being*. 'Tis from hence that he infers our nearneſs to him, or our Union with him. We Live in him, therefore he is not far from us, but moſt immediately united with us: For he cannot be nearer to us, than for us to Live, Move, and have our Being in *him*.

'Tis obſervable, that the Apoſtle does not ſay *by him*, but *in him*, to intimate the immediateneſs, the inwardneſs of his Eſſential Preſence and Union with the Soul; and that this *in him*, muſt not be underſtood of the meer Power and Efficacious Influence of God (as ſome will have

have it;) but of the very Eſſence and Subſtance of the Divine Nature, is plain from the conſequence drawn from it, which otherwiſe would be none at all. For it would be no proof of the *nearneſs* of God to us, to ſay that we live in him, meaning by *in him*, only his Power and efficacious influence in Preſerving us in being. Such an Argument as this would hardly have paſſed with the Learned *Athenians*. Beſides that, had this been the Apoſtle's meaning, it would have been much better expreſſed, by ſaying, *by him*, than *in him*. Which Expreſſion therefore both conſidering its proper natural Emphaſis, and the concluſion which it is brought in to prove, can be ſuppoſed to intend no leſs than the *Eſſential* and *Subſtantial* Preſence of God, and that we live, move and have our Being in him, not only as the *efficient cauſe*, but as the inward *Baſis* and *Foundation* of our Life, Motion and Being, ſuſtaining and ſupporting us, as *Space* is ſuppoſed to do the Bodies that exiſt in it: We are in God, as Bodies are in Space. God penetrates our Being, and contains us, and we dwell in him; he is our *Place*, that which contains us, that which ſupports us, and pervades every part of us; according to another very remarkable Expreſſion of the ſame Apoſtle concerning God, that

that *he is above all, and through all, and in us all*, Eph. 4. 6. Than which nothing could have been ſaid more Expreſſive of God's Eſſential Preſence to us, and of that intimate immediate Union we have with him. So then God penetrates our Eſſence, and we dwell in his, even as Space penetrates Bodies, and Bodies dwell in Space. And what Union can be imagin'd more cloſe, more intimate than this? Or how can we be more nearly united to God, than for God to penetrate us, and for us to dwell and be contained in him! The Union which we have with Bodies, or which Bodies have with each other, is nothing to this ſtrict Union which the Soul has with God, who indeed is more intimately united with his Creatures, than they are or can be with one another.

This is the *Natural* Union of the Soul with God; and thus all his Creatures are united to him, as well as the Soul of Man. Bodies are thus united to him, as well as Spirits, and bad Spirits as well as good ones; Divils as well as Angels, and the Damn'd as well as the the Bleſſed. Nor is there any *inequality* as to this Union, which indeed is ſo cloſe that it cannot be cloſer. The brighteſt Angel of Light is not thus more intimately united to God, than the blackeſt Spirit of Darkneſs;

for

for God can but penetrate the Subſtance of an Angel, and ſo he does that of an Evil Spirit; and an Angel can but have his Being and Dwelling in God, and ſo muſt alſo an Evil Spirit be ſuppoſed to have. As *Space* is equally united to all manner of *Bodies*, ſo *God* is equally united to all manner of *Spirits*. The vileſt piece of Dirt, and the brighteſt Jewel or Star are equally penetrated by Space, and equally contained in it; and conſequently equally united to it. And the ſame we muſt conceive of the pureſt and impureſt Spirits, with relation to God, who equally penetrates and contains them all, and conſequently is equally united to them all.

The Sum of this matter is, All Spirits that exiſt, are eſſentially united to God, (for 'tis by this that they do exiſt, and ſhould they be intirely diſunited from him, they would ceaſe to be,) and this Eſſential Union between God and them, is more intimate and immediate than any Union they can poſſibly have with Bodies, or with one another: And being ſo cloſe and intimate as it is, it cannot but be equal in Relation to them all. For this natural Union of Spirits with God being founded upon this *Eſſential Omnipreſence*, whereby he throughly penetrates and intirely contains their whole ſubſtance, it is plain that it cannot admit of more or leſs, but muſt

muſt be ſuppoſed equal in reſpect to all Spirits, yea, all Creatures that have any Being, which they cannot have but in God, with whom they are therefore equally united. This Natural Union with God therefore, tho a great Benefit, Honour and Perfection, is yet no peculiar *Priviledge* of the Soul of Man, ſince all other Creatures partake of it with her; her own *Body* being thus as much united to God as her ſelf. But there is another Union with God, whereof Bodies are not at all capable, and which even Spirits partake of more or leſs, which brings me to conſider,

Secondly, The Moral Union between God and the Soul. That Natural Tye which faſtens us to God ſo cloſe, that it cannot be ſtrain'd cloſer. But tho we cannot ſtrain the *ſame* Knot any *harder*, yet we may bind our ſelves faſter to God by *another Cord*, by adding to our Natural a Moral Union. Now as the other is an Union of our *Natures*, ſo this is an Union of our *Wills*, and is no other than the *Love* of God. Whatever we love, we unite our ſelves to, and the more we love, the more are we ſo United. Were it poſſible for Man to love nothing out of himſelf, he would not be in union with any thing, but perfectly looſe and free, ſeparate and independent. But ſince every Man is too defective *within*, to love nothing *without*,

out, there is no Man but what is bound and chain'd faſt to ſomething or other: He that loves the World, is united to the World; he that loves Mony, is united to his Mony; and he that loves God, is united to God; and he that loves God moſt, is united to him moſt, *He that dwelleth in Love, dwelleth in God*, Joh. 4. 16. ſays St. *John*; that is, is nearly united to him, and in a more eſpecial manner made one with him: For we all *neceſſarily* dwell in God, as having our Being in him. This is that Natural Union which we have with God, and which all other Creatures have as well as we. That *Dwelling in God* therefore which St. *John* here ſpeaks of, and which he makes to be the proper conſequence and effect of the Love of God, muſt be underſtood of a more eſpecial and extraordinary Union, a Union of Will and Affection, the ſame with this our *Moral* Union of the Soul with God.

This Union of the Soul with God, will indeed never be compleat in this World; where, as we *know* but in part, ſo we *love* but in part, and ſo are but partially *united* to God. For we are at preſent united to *Creatures* as well as to God, and 'tis the unhappineſs of moſt of us, to be more united to the former than to the latter. And indeed the Union we have with the

the Creatures is ſo ſtrong, and faſtened with ſo many Knots, that nothing can diſſolve it, but what diſſolves us at the ſame time. Nothing but what ſeparates Soul from Body, will untye this Knot, nothing but *Death* is ſtronger than this *Love*. Spiritual Death or Mortification will indeed go a great way towards it, and we know a certain Perſon who by this Method arrived ſo far, as to be able to ſay, *the World is Crucified unto me, and I unto the World.* But this is a rare inſtance, and muſt be underſtood too in a qualified Senſe; for as long as we are in the Body, we ſhall in ſome meaſure depend upon what has relation to the Body, and the World will ſtill claim ſome ſort of Kin and Alliance with us; and we ſhall never be able intirely to ſhake it off, as long as we keep our *Morality* on.

But this Union will not laſt always, Death that *Univerſal Menſtruum* will diſſolve it; the ſame fatal Stroak that cuts the Knot of Life, will cut off that Band too which ties us to the World, ſet us abſolutely looſe and free, and intirely diſingage us from all the Creatures. And then if at that Moment we have any true Love to God, it will perfectly unite us to him; for being quite empty of the Creatures, and having no further Dependance upon them,

them, or Inclination to them, we ſhall then love God intirely with our whole Heart, Soul and Mind; and as our *Love* will be made Perfect, ſo will our *Union* too: We ſhall then be ſo united to God, as to have Union with nothing but him, and with him, ſo ſtrictly, as not to be capable of ever being ſeparated from him.

In the mean time, this Moral Union of the Soul with God, may arrive to a great degree in this Life, tho it cannot be abſolutely perfect and compleat but in the other. And as 'tis here attainable in great meaſure, ſo 'tis abſolutely *neceſſary* in *ſome*. There is indeed a great Latitude in this Union, which admits of as many degrees, as our Love to God does, in reſpect of which, one Soul may be more nearly united to God than another, and the ſame Soul may be more nearly united to God at one time than another. But notwithſtanding this indefinite variety of *increaſe* and *decreaſe* in this our Union with God, there is a degree of it that is fix'd and immoveable, and below which it can never fall; even this *Moral* Union with God, is *neceſſary* in ſome degree, as well as the *Natural*; and tho all Spirits are not equally united to God in reſpect of this Moral Union, as they are in reſpect of the Natural, yet they all are in ſome Meaſure or other, and will always be. For

For as there is no Spirit but what was made for the Love of God, so there is no Spirit but what does actually love him, and adhere to him in some degree or other; even the Souls of the Damn'd, and the Devil himself, do in some measure love God, and are accordingly in some measure united to him. To love God more or less is *free*, but absolutely to love him, is *necessary* and unavoidable; every intelligent Creature does so, and must do so, at least *implicitly* and *confusely*, if not explicitly and distinctly. For every Spirit, even those who are in an actual state of Damnation, must love *Happiness*, (otherwise they would not be capable of being what we suppose them, that is, *Miserable*;) and all Happiness being in the truth and reality of the thing, the very same with the enjoyment of God, 'tis plain, that in loving Happiness, they have some *general glance* at God, and that he is at least the implicit and confuse Object of their Love.

'Tis most certain that every Creature that has Understanding and Will, was made for the Knowledge and for the Love of God, and know him and love him they must in some measure or other; for God cannot wholly fail of his end. They indeed may fail of theirs, in not contemplating and loving God to those degrees that they ought as reasonable Beings, and which are necessary

to

to make them *Happy*; but there is an abſolute neceſſity of their knowing and loving him in ſome degree or other, otherwiſe thoſe their Powers of Underſtanding and Will would wholly miſs the end for which they were made, and ſo would be in vain, and ſerve for nothing, which is abſurd to ſuppoſe.

But beſides is it poſſible that God ſhould have any Love for that Spirit that has none for him? And if God ſhould utterly ceaſe to love him, could that Spirit any longer exiſt? Can that thing exiſt, which God does not at all love? Can any thing be without the Will of God? But Spirits do exiſt, and always ſhall, as being immortal. And may we not hence conclude, that God does in ſome meaſure love them, and conſequently that they alſo do in ſome meaſure love God? ſince otherwiſe they would neither be loved by him, nor *be* at all. For there is no being out of the *Love*, any more than there is out of the *Eſſential Preſence* of God.

Should any Spirit utterly ceaſe to love God, he muſt needs in that very inſtant ceaſe to be: For there is nothing lovely in the Will of that Creature, which is wholly averſe from God; conſequently God cannot love that Will, conſequently that Will can no longer exiſt, (unleſs we can ſuppoſe

any thing to exiſt, whoſe Exiſtence God does not will,) and conſequently there muſt be an end alſo of that Spirit, unleſs we can ſuppoſe a Rational Nature to exiſt without a Will, and that loves nothing; which alſo upon another account will be the reſult of this ſuppoſition. For that Spirit (could we ſuppoſe ſuch a one,) that does not at all love God, muſt not love at all, or muſt love *nothing*; for if he loves any thing, it muſt be *Happineſs*, and if he loves that, he does at leaſt confuſely and implicitly love God, as I remark'd before. So then every way it is abſolutely neceſſary, that all Spirits ſhould in ſome degree or other love God; and this *Moral* Union of the Soul with her Creator, is no more perfectly and intirely to be broken off or diſſolv'd, than the *Natural*.

And thus far of this Two-fold Union that is between the Soul and God. I proceed now to conſider the Perfection that accrues to the Soul from each.

The whole Perfection of the Soul, is either internal or external, from within or without; either that Perfection which ſhe has in her ſelf, from the Eſſentials of her Nature and Conſtitution, or that which ſhe derives from her Union with ſome other Being. Now that Perfection which ſhe has in her ſelf, is ſo inconſiderable, if compared with

with her Natural Inclinations, (as was remark'd in the beginning,) that ſhe is forced to go out of her ſelf, and to joyn her ſelf to ſome other Being more perfect than her ſelf. That Being which we are all naturally united, is God; and he is alſo the Being to which we are all Morally united in ſome meaſure. And 'tis in our power to ſtrengthen and confirm this Union by free and voluntary applications, and to make it more and more cloſe and intire, till at laſt it be perfect and conſummate, as I have diſcourſed already. But now ſince our natural and inward Perfection turns to ſo little an account, let us ſee what that Perfection is, which accrues to the Soul from without, which ſhe gains by her Union with God. And Firſt as to the Perfections that reſult from her Natural Union, among which I conſider,

Firſt, *Her Natural Being or Exiſtence.* This is the Firſt general Perfection that accrues to the Soul from her Union with God; as ſhe exiſts from him, and in him, ſo does ſhe alſo exiſt by him, or by her Union with him; for God is the inmoſt Support and Foundation, as well as Cauſe of all his Works; the whole Creation reſts upon him as upon a Center, and he bears and ſuſtains all things by his *Eſſence*, as he produces all things by his *Will*. As all things

that are, are united to God, ſo 'tis by this their Union with him, that all things are; and tho it be not neceſſary that whatever is united to God, ſhould continue to exiſt, (for then it would not be in the Power of God to annihilate any thing,) yet 'tis eſſential to every thing that exiſts, to be united to God, and nothing can be intirely ſeparated from him, without ceaſing to be. The only total Separation from God, whereof a Creature is capable, is *Annihilation*.

For ſhould a Creature exiſt, and not exiſt in God, pray what would be the Foundation of that his Exiſtence? Or would he want none? That we cannot ſay, for if he want none, then a Creature will be able to ſubſiſt in and by it ſelf; and if it can bear ſuch a *Solitude* as this, it muſt be from ſuch a Perfection of his Nature as involves Independency in being, which cannot be, but in a Being who is ſo perfect as to have Exiſtence eſſential to his Nature; (for only a Neceſſary Being can be an independent Being:) Which perfection if we once grant a Creature, we ſhall leave nothing that will diſtinguiſh him from his God. We cannot therefore ſay, that a Creature needs no Foundation for his Exiſtence, or that he can exiſt in *nothing*; he muſt therefore exiſt in ſomething. But if that ſomething be ſtill a Creature, there is nothing gain'd; for that Creature

ture being ſuppoſed not to be *ſelf-ſubſiſtent*, will ſtill need ſome further Foundation. He muſt therefore have God for the Foundation of his Exiſtence, and ſtay his Being upon the *Rock of Ages*. He muſt ſubſiſt by his Union with him, who ſubſiſts in and by himſelf, whoſe Eſſential Preſence is the great neceſſary Preſervative of whatever he has made, and who (as the Scripture tells us) *upholds all things by the Word of his Power*, Heb. 1. 3.

Secondly, *Intellectual Light*. This is another Perfection that redounds to the Soul, from her Union with God; for God is Light, and he that dwelleth in God dwelleth in Light: God is Truth, and he that is united to God, is alſo united to Truth. And how can an intelligent Being dwell in Light, without being inlightned, or be united to Truth without being inſtructed? God has in himſelf the Ideas of all things, that is, ſome ſuch Perfections *in himſelf*; as anſwer to, and repreſent all the degrees of Being that are *out of himſelf*. This would be eaſily demonſtrable, (could I ſtand to do it) from the general Nature of God, who as being infinitely Perfect, muſt needs be ſuppoſed to include within his Eſſence, after an intelligible manner, all degrees of Reality, the whole poſſibility of Being. But beſides, how elſe could God

make the World, how could he *Create*, unleſs he be ſuppoſed to have it himſelf the Ideas of all things? For tho the World was
k made out of *nothing*, yet it muſt be made according to *ſomething*; and where could that ſomething be, but in God? when as yet there was not any thing exiſting but God. The *Natural* exiſtence of things is founded upon their *Ideal* exiſtence; and if things had not firſt exiſted in *Idea*, they could never have exiſted in *Nature*; unleſs you will ſuppoſe God to have acted blindfold, and in the dark, without thinking of what he made, or conſidering how or for what he made it. If God made all things with Counſel and Deſign, if his Wiſdom was then aſſiſting to his Power, (as who dare ſay it was not, eſpecially, ſince *Wiſdom* Prov. 8. her ſelf ſays, that ſhe was preſent at the making of the World, 'tis moſt certain that he muſt have the Ideas of all things in himſelf, and that he made all things according to thoſe eternal Ideas. For there can be no deſign without Thinking, and there can be no Thinking without Ideas, without an immediate Object of Thought, which could be no other than the Eſſence of God himſelf, as being ſuppoſed antecedent to the exiſtence of all Creatures, which could then have no Being but in the Divine

Divine Mind. If therefore God made all things with Counſel and Deſign, he muſt have the Ideas of all things in himſelf; but if you will ſay that God did not make what he has made with Counſel and Deſign, beſides the impiety and abſurdity of the Suppoſition, I know not what advantage it is to the Creation to have had a *God* for its Author, ſince blind Chance or unaccountable Fate would have done as well. Beſides, had not God an Eternal foreknowledge of all his Creatures? But how or in what could he eternally foreknow them, but in himſelf, and by his own eternal Ideas? For God could not foreknow them as they *were not*, but as they *were*. If than God foreknew them from all Eternity, 'tis certain that they *were* from all Eternity. But they were not thus in *Nature*, therefore they were thus in their Ideas only, and conſequently 'twas not in their *Natural*, but in their *Ideal* Entities, that they were the Objects of God's Eternal Foreknowledge. God foreknew them from Eternity, as they were from Eternity, that is, not in themſelves, but in his own Eternal Ideas. And ſo alſo he muſt be ſuppoſed to know them now, not in themſelves as they are out of him, but in his own Ideas, unleſs you will ſuppoſe God to know his Works now

ſince the Creation after another manner, than he did from all Eternity; unleſs you will ſuppoſe a *Change* in the Divine Knowledge, and ſuch as is for the *worſe* too, it being an infinitely leſs perfect way of Knowledge for God to know Creatures in *themſelves*, than to know them in *himſelf*, and by his own Ideas. Upon theſe and ſeveral other grounds which (were it not for running in too far into the Heart of Speculation,) I could eaſily aſſign, it is a Propoſition of unqueſtionable certainty, that God has in himſelf the Ideas of all things, and that he ſees all things in thoſe Ideas, and ſo is his own Light.

But now what a *Perfection* muſt it be for a Soul to be united to ſuch a Being as this! To a Being that is all things, and contains all things! To him who poſſeſſes all the Eternal Reaſons and Eſſences of things, with all their fix'd and immutable Habitudes and Relations, who is Eſſential Light, and Subſtantial Truth! Can a Soul united to ſuch a Being want Light? Or can ſhe doubt whether ſhe has her Light from him? Whence elſe *ſhould* ſhe have it? Whence elſe can ſhe have it? or whence elſe *need* ſhe have it? For if God has in himſelf the Ideas of all things, and if the Soul be united to this *Omni-form* Eſſence of God, 'tis plain that there is nothing wanting to the *Poſſible*, nay,

nay, (in ſome degree) to the *neceſſary* illumination of the Soul; who being united to God, muſt alſo conſequently be united to the Divine Ideas, which therefore not only *may*, but in ſome meaſure *muſt* be the *immediate Object* of her Mind; which is all that I know of that is requiſite to Intellectual Illumination. 'Tis therefore by our Union with God and his Eternal Truth, that we become Rational and Underſtanding Creatures, who if he either were not, or were never ſo little ſeparate from us, we ſhould fall immediately into an intellectual Stupor and ſilence of Spirit, and ſhould not be able to think one Thought, or ſo much as to be Conſcious of our very Being. For God is the true Light of all Spirits, and were this Light never ſo little eclips'd, an Intellectual Darkneſs would preſently ſeize upon all Minds, and the Brighteſt Intelligences would be ſtruck Blind. That they are not ſo now, is purely owing to that Union they have with the Eternal Light and Truth, which becomes the immediate Object of their Minds, their Intelligible Light, their Idea. And thus 'tis alſo with the Soul of Man, who partaking of the ſame *Union*, partakes alſo of the ſame Intellectual *Light*. As God ſees all things in himſelf, ſo ſhe ſees all things in God; and 'tis by her Eſſential *Union* with him that ſhe does ſo. Third-

Thirdly, *The whole Pleaſure and Comfort of our Being.* This is another and the moſt moving and ingaging of thoſe Perfections which the Soul derives from her Union with God, Pleaſure is a Perfection of the Soul, and when the the Soul ſhall be moſt perfect, (as in the other ſtate,) ſhe ſhall then be in the moſt Pleaſure. And as her greater degree of Pleaſure will then proceed from the greater degree of her Union with God, ſo 'tis very reaſonable to conclude that ſhe has now ſome degrees of the ſame Perfection, from ſome degrree of Union with the ſame Principle. God (as I have proved at large in another Diſcourſe,) is the only true efficient cauſe of all our *Senſations*, and conſequently of all our *Pleaſure*; and 'tis by that Eſſential Union he has with us, that he Communicates this Perfection to us. Did not God act in and upon our Spirit, by putting it into different Modifications, it is impoſſible that we ſhould have any pleaſing Senſations; and were not the Soul eſſentially united to God, 'tis impoſſible that he ſhould any way act upon it. For there is no ſuch thing as *Action at a diſtance*, properly ſpeaking either in the Operations of the Creature, or in the Operations of God. The Power of God is not of a further Extent than his Preſence, (and it need not,

not, ſince his Preſence is Infinite.) Nor is God any where *Efficaciouſly*, but where he is *Subſtantially*; there is no ſuch thing as a mere *Influential* Preſence of God: If God were not Eſſentially united to the Material World, he could not communicate any *Motion* to it; and if he were not as Eſſentially united to the Intellectual World, the World of Spirits, he could not communicate to them either *Light* or *Pleaſure*. For if God acts, he acts by his Will, and his Will is himſelf; and conſequently he can act no where, but where he is. 'Tis therefore our Eſſential Union with God, which makes us capable of his acting upon our Souls, and whereby we come to have all thoſe Sentiments of Pleaſure and Joy wherewith they are at any time affected.

But beſides thoſe particular Senſations of Pleaſure which are occaſionally and upon ſome certain impreſſions excited in us, we cannot but find a certain general Sentiment of Pleaſure that accompanies our *Being*, and which does not come and go, off and on, as our other Senſations do, but remains fix'd and permanent, and maintains one conſtant and uninterrupted ſteddineſs. Tho we have no particular occaſion of Joy, or incitement of Pleaſure from any thing without, from any

of

of thoſe ſenſible Objects which ſurround us; tho all things about us are ſilent, and our own Thoughts too are no way ingaged upon any Object extraordinary, yet we feel a certain Pleaſure in our very *Exiſtence*, not in our being thus or thus, in this or that ſtate of Mind or Body, (for I abſtract at preſent from any particular Senſation,) but abſolutely and ſimply in our *Being*, in our being Conſcious to our Selves that we *are*. This general Pleaſure of *meer Being*, (for ſo I think it may be fitly call'd,) every Man may much better *Experiment* than I can *deſcribe*; and I believe there is no Man that has convers'd intimately with himſelf, but who is ſufficiently ſenſible of the thing I would expreſs.

Now this Pleaſure accompanying our Being as ſuch, it will be neceſſary to ſuppoſe it inſeparable from all intelligent Beings while they exiſt, even thoſe who are moſt *unhappy*, who though they may have it ſo outweighed and overſet with Miſery, that they were better be without it, than pay ſo dearly for it; (for I cannot be of a Mind with thoſe who will have it better to *be* tho in extream Miſery, than *not* to *be*;) yet have it they muſt, as long as their Being laſts, tho it be ſo drown'd and overwhelm'd in a contrary Sentiment, that they cannot enjoy the Sweetneſs of it. But now whence ſhould this general

general Pleaſure of meer Being, ariſe in theſe Miſerable Beings? Not ſure from any poſitive and direct Act of God, as our particular Senſations do; for it cannot be ſuppoſed that God by any expreſs Will or Act of his, would reward thoſe wretched Spirits with pleaſing Senſations, who deſerve his ſevereſt Anger, and whom he is then *Puniſhing* for their Demerits. And may it not then be reſolved into that Eſſential Union, that even ſuch Spirits have, (for otherwiſe they could not be) with the infinite and all-being God, who is ſo excellent an Eſſence, ſo Sovereign a Good, that there is no Being united to him, without being ſomething the better for him, without partaking of ſome degree of Pleaſure. So then we owe the whole Pleaſure and Comfort of our Being to our Union with God, were it not for which, we ſhould have neither *Light* nor *Warmth*; Darkneſs and Deſolation, Privation and Sterility would be our Portion; we ſhould feel nothing, nor know nothing, nor ſo much as *Be*.

And thus far of the Perfection that redounds to the Soul from her *Natural* Union with God; I ſhall now briefly conſider that which proceds from her *Moral* Union

on with the ſame Principle. Here I might ſhew, that the Love of God, (for that is what we underſtand here by this Moral Union,) is the trueſt Key of Knowledge; according to that Sublime Aphoriſm of a Great Man, *Amor Dei eſt Lux Animæ*; that it brightens the Underſtanding, as well as warms the Affections; Clears the Head, as well as inlarges the Heart, and gives to the Soul an open and a free view of the greateſt and nobleſt Truths, both in Nature and in Religion. That it is the beſt Teacher and Inſtructor in *Theory*, and the beſt Guide and Director in *Practice*, the beſt Expoſitor of Scripture, the beſt Reſolver of Doubts, the beſt Diſtinguiſher of the Will of God, the beſt Decider of Caſes of Conſcience, and the beſt Moderator and Compoſer of Diſputes and Controverſies in Religion; and in one Word, that as the *Fear of God is the beginning*, ſo the *Love* of God is the *Perfection* and Accompliſhment of *Wiſdom*. But this being matter of Experience more than of Notion, I ſhall rather apply my ſelf to conſider how the Love of God perfects the *Will* of Man, which is the proper Seat of it.

As the Love of God has an *Effective* Influence towards the Perfecting of the Underſtanding, ſo is it the immediate and

and *formal* Perfection of the Will. For it is the Perfection of every Power or Faculty, to be imploy'd about its proper Object, and in proſecution of its proper End. Now God is the only proper Object and End of the Will, not only becauſe he is (as I have elſewhere ſhewn,) our only true Good, as being the Cauſe of all our Pleaſure and Happineſs; but alſo becauſe the Will of Man was made for the Love of God, and for him only. 'Twill I ſuppoſe be readily granted me, that the Will was made to *Love*, as much as the Eye was made to *See*, or the Ear to *Hear*, this being the whole uſe and purpoſe to which it is fitted to Serve. But to Love *what?* Was it made to Love it ſelf? But how can a finite Being be its own end? Or was it made to love any of its Fellow-Creatures? But ſtay, if the Will be made to love a Creature, then the ſame Creature that is the End of this Will, muſt be alſo the End of God too, who is ſuppoſed to make it for that End. But now can a Creature be the end of God? Can God deſire or aim at any thing out of himſelf? Or, can God act for any thing out of himſelf? How then is he a Being infinite in Perfection, and every way Self-ſufficient? But ſuppoſe it were poſſible for God to have any

End

End or Aim, to deſire or propoſe any thing out of himſelf, yet why or to what purpoſe ſhould he do it? For is not God infinitely Wiſe? and muſt he not then love that which is moſt Lovely? and muſt he not therefore love himſelf more than all other things whatever, and ſo make himſelf the end of all his Actions, and conſequently of his whole Creation? All things then are made *for* God, as well as *by* him, and he is the End of all his Works. If therefore the Will of Man was *made*, it was made for *God*; and if it was made to *Love*, it was made to love *God*. And indeed there is no other way of conceiving how the Will ſhould be made for God, than by being made for the Love of God, who can no otherwiſe be its End, than as he is its *Object*. I conclude therefore that God is the proper End and Object of the Will, which was made only for God, and the Love of God, and is then conſequently in her greateſt Perfection when imployed in the Love of him that made her, and for whom ſhe was made. The Love of God is the greateſt Moral Perfection of the Soul, puts her in a right frame and poſture, and entertains her with the Divineſt Joy and Pleaſure, ſets her above the Tyranny of *Concupiſcence*, and all her other troubleſom Paſſions, raiſes

raiſes her beyond the mean Joys, and unreaſonable Griefs of Life, and is the beſt Antidote againſt the Terrors of Death, conforms her Will to the Will of God, and is a ſtay to her in all the Revolutions of his Providence, exalts her above the inſipid Entertainments of the World, and helps to ſupport her under the Senſe of its Emptineſs and Vanity; in one Word, makes her fit to reliſh her Union with God here, and diſpoſes her for a ſtricter and more *Beatifick* Union with him hereafter.

And thus have I conſider'd that double Union which the Soul has with God, *Natural* and *Moral*, and thoſe reſpective Perfections which reſult from them, and which ſhe enjoys by Virtue of them, whereby the Truth of that great and ſublime Theorem we laid down may be in ſome meaſure illuſtrated, *viz.* that *the Perfection of the Soul is her Union with God.* Here is the *Fons boni Lucidus*, the bright and ever-ſhining Fountain of Good; the Well of Life, the Spring of Joy, the Water of Comfort, and the River of Pleaſure, and Happy is the Soul that ſhall bathe her ſelf in it: The deeper ſhe wades in theſe Living Waters, the higher the Tide of her Happineſs riſes; for here is her whole Perfection Natural and Moral, all that ſhe enjoys and all that ſhe is ever capable of.

But if the whole Perfection of the Soul be in her Union with God, if it all reſolves into this Point, what is it then to be *ſeparated* from him? And what muſt the condition of thoſe Wretched Spirits be, who have no more Union with God, than what is juſt enough to ſuſtain them in Being, and make them capable of ſubſiſting under that Privation of God, which would otherwiſe Annihilate them? What muſt be the Darkneſs, what the Poverty, what the Barrenneſs, what the Coldneſs, Dryneſs, Deadneſs, Emptineſs, Deſolation and Solitude of ſuch a State! *Depart from me ye Curſed!* I need not add into Everlaſting Fire, for here we have *Hell* enough already. What, to be thrown off from our *Center*, to be forc'd away from the Point of our Tendency and our Reſt, to be baniſh'd from the only Good, the Joy, the Pleaſure, the Life, the Light, the Warmth, the Sun of our Souls: Eye hath not ſeen, neither hath Ear heard, nor can it enter into the Heart of Man to conceive what a ſtate of Miſery and unhappineſs this muſt be. If the Partial and ſhort Eclipſe of the Light of this great Sun made even the Lion of the Tribe of *Judah* roar out in a bitter Agony, *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me*, what muſt be the Miſery, the Damnation, the Hell of that

that Spirit who is throughly and eternally *forsaken* of his God?

It is good then for me, may every rational Soul say, *to draw near unto God*; since my whole Perfection both Natural and Moral consists in my Union with him. It is good for me, indeed the best thing I can do, to hold me fast by my God, to unite my self to him by as many Ties and Bands as I can, by all the Cords and Chains of Love, and by every Link of that Chain, to make this Union as close and as strong as is possible, and so to draw near to him, and fasten my self upon him by the most *Cleaving* Love, that he may reward my imperfect Union here, with a Perfect and Everlasting one hereafter. This is the true and only interest of every Rational Soul, tho there are but few that are so rational as to be duly sensible of it, or that consider how advantagious, how necessary it is for them to draw near unto God, and to enter into a close union with him. But to those few who are sensible of the Interest and Necessity of this Union with God, and would know by what means they might be best assisted towards the effecting it, I would advise,

1. *To Retire.* The Noise, Hurry, Business, Impertinence, Folly, Sin, Vanity and Contagion of the World, do not well

comport with either the Habit or the Practice of Divine Love. The Spirit of Devotion and Divine Application cannot breathe in ſuch thick groſs Air, Cant. 7. 11. *Come my Beloved, let us go forth into the Field, let us lodge in the Villages,* is the Voice and Language of the Spouſe to Chriſt, and ſo it is of every Devout and Divinely-affected Soul. And ſays God to his Church, Hoſ. 2. 14. *I willl lead her into the Wilderneſs, and ſpeak comfortably unto her.* Solitude and Retirement is the proper Advantage and Opportunity of Divine Love, and of uniting our Souls with God, and of reliſhing and enjoying that Union: The Senſe of which made a Devout Soul once break forth into this Seraphick Rapture,

O Solitudo Mentibus
Orantium gratiſſima,
O vera Cordis Suavitas,
Ignota vulgi Senſibus,
Ut te requiro & expeto
Turbam peroſus improbam!
Hic, hic Serena Spiritus,
Aſpirat aura Pectori.
Hic nullus auditer fremens
Tumultuantium fragor.
Hic Corda nullus inquinat
Vapor, vel umbra Criminis.

Campi

Campi Sonant hic Mellicis,
Psallentium Concentibus.
Hic Angelorum Cœtibus
Immixtus, & vindex sui
Sapiens quietam transigit
Vitam procul negotiis,
Curis procul nocentibus,
Solutus omni jurgio.
Hic alto vitans Curiæ
Potentioris Limina
Innoxios ducit dies
Inanis expers Ambitus.
Hic lucra Conscientiæ
Quadrante justo Computans
Studet Mereri Fletibus
Amissa Cœli Gaudia.
Optet Superba Culmina,
Opes, domusq; Splendidas
Quicunq; vult. Me Nescium
Fraudis juvat Silentium,
Me Solitudo, me Quies
Abscondat ignotum omnibus,
Deoq. soli Cognitum.
Hoc scire demum, hoc vivere est,
Sibi, Deoq; *vivere.*

2. *To Contemplate.* And now thou art *retired*, thou may'st advantagiously do so, and *must* if thou wilt ever unite thy self to thy God, and kindle in thy Heart a Seraphick Flame of Devotion and Divine

Love. The Will always receives its Orders from the Understanding, and we love every thing according to the view which we have of its Amiableness. If therefore thou wilt raise in thy Soul a well-grounded and affectionate Love of God, place him before thee in a good Light, and take an advantagious view of him from the Elevations of Contemplation. Meditate upon him frequently and attentively, (for he will bear that severe Test,) and contemplate the infinite Perfection, the sovereign Goodness, the Transcendent Excellency, the *Centrality* of his Divine Essence; think of his Beauty, think of his Loveliness, think of his Love to thee, and whilst thou art thus *Musing, the Fire will kindle.*

3. *To Mortify.* A very harsh and ungrateful, but very necessary Method for the Love of God, and our Union with him. We must first Die to our *Selves* and to the *World*, before we can either Love God, or Live unto him. Mortify therefore both thy *Body* and thy *Soul*, but especially thy Soul, purge it first of all of *Self-Love*, which of all Dispositions of Mind is most opposite to, and inconsistent with the Love of God. Next, empty it of the *World*, and of all Love towards *Sensible* things; unburthen it of all Covetousness, Ambition, Pride, Lust, Envy and all manner

ner of Carnal and Worldly Sentiments, cleanſe it, purify it, ſtrip it, ſimplify it, let nothing adhere to it that ſavours either of *Self*, or of the *World*; nothing that may by its interpoſal hinder that immediate Contact, that *Central Touch* between thee and thy God. And when once thou haſt reduced thy Soul to this *Singleneſs* and *Simplicity*, thou wilt find that the leaſt Attraction of the Divine Spirit will draw thee after it. When once one Scale of the Balance is thus emptied of the Creature, the leaſt weight of Divine Grace will weigh down the other. The more we draw off from our *ſelves* and from the *World*, the nearer we ſhall draw to God; and the cloſer we are united to him, the nearer we ſhall be to our Happineſs, and the more we ſhall be ſtill convinc'd as we draw nearer and nearer, that *the Perfection of the Soul is her Union with God.*

To whom be all Glory.

A

DISCOURSE

OF

The Honour due to Good Men, and of the great Crime of treating them with Scorn and Contempt.

2 Tim. 3. 3.

Deſpiſers of thoſe that are good.

NEver does an ill Man appear ſo truly *Contemptible*, as when he deſpiſes him that is Good and Virtuous; and never does the Good Man appear more truly *Honourable*, than when he can patiently and meekly indure, deſpiſe, and forgive that Contempt; which however difficult upon a Surprize, he will find both more reaſonable and more eaſie to do, when he

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ſhall ſilently recollect with himſelf, and conſider First, What an inward ſufficiency and ſelf-Contentedneſs there is in true Goodneſs, how little it *needs* that Honour and Reſpect which it *deſerves*. Secondly, In what Credit and Eſtimation he is with God, and with the Saints and Angels of Light, and Wiſe and Good Men upon Earth, the beſt Judges both of Perſons and Things. When he ſhall conſider Thirdly, the great and Honourable Characters and Repreſentations which are given of him in Holy Scripture, where he is always ſet forth as the only Wiſe, Rich, Great, Powerful and Happy Man, as the onely Perſon of true Worth and Honour. And Fourthly, The Figure that Virtue and Goodneſs makes in Human Writings, the beſt and greateſt part of which are imployed in drawing fair and beautiful Ideas of it, and in recommending its Practice upon the ſtrongeſt Arguments of Reaſon and Intereſt. And withal Fifthly; That theſe are the Reſult of Mens Cool, Sober and Beſt Thoughts, compoſed in Solitude and Retirement, upon the deepeſt Conſideration and Recollection, when they are beſt able to think, and moſt ſincere in the delivery of their Sentiments. And that Sixthly, Though a great many have the Impudence to make Goodneſs the Object of their Sport

and

and Raillery in Common Talk, yet very few have ventured to give this their Folly under their Hands, and to let it ſtand upon publick Record; ſo that there are it may be above a Thouſand Volumes ſoberly and judiciouſly written in the Honour and Vindication of Virtue, to one *Libel* that dares appear againſt it. When he ſhall moreover conſider Seventhly, the Secret Approbations and Applauſes of his own Conſcience continually clearing him of the Contempt that is caſt upon him, and commending him for his Patience under it. Eighthly, The inward Veneration that Goodneſs often extorts from many of thoſe who are the greateſt Strangers to it, and ſeem at the greateſt defiance with it. Ninthly, The Confeſſions of the moſt Extravagant that occaſionally drop from them in their more ſober intervals, when kept from Wine and Company, they have been ſuffered to come a little to themſelves, and have had a little leiſure to Reflect. And Tenthly, The more permanent and ſtanding Declarations of Returning Sinners, the ſolemn Retractations of Repentance, which upon the Review and with the advantage of *Second Thought*, determines on the ſide of Goodneſs and Virtue. When he ſhall conſider Eleventhly, That the brighteſt Examples of Virtue have ever been moſt undervalued,

ed, and met with the greateſt Deſpite. That Twelfthly, This is one of thoſe *Perſecutions* which thoſe that will live Godly in Chriſt Jeſus muſt ſuffer. That Thirteenthly, The Beſt of Men have ſuffered it: And Fourteenthly, That even our Bleſſed Lord himſelf was thus treated, among whoſe Prophetick Characters this is one of the Chief, *He is deſpiſed and rejected of Men, Iſa.* 53. 3. When he ſhall yet further conſider Fifteenthly, That the Judgments and Opinions of Men make no real alteration either in the value of things, or in the condition of Perſons; and conſequently the little or no hurt that Contempt does to any Body, beſides him that Entertains it. And Sixteenthly, The *Glory* that Virtue caſts about the Head of thoſe who ſuffer this little *Martyrdom* for her ſake here; and Seventeenthly, The *Crown* that ſhe is preparing and refining for them hereafter.

Upon theſe Conſiderations a Good Man may eaſily raiſe himſelf ſo far above all that Contempt which his Goodneſs expoſes him to, as not only to bear and forgive, but even *deſpiſe* it. But if theſe are too many to be preſently recollected, or attended to at once, and if he would be more compendiouſly aſſiſted, let him but conſider from what Quiver this Arrow comes, who it is that treats him with Contempt: That 'tis

a *Fools Bolt*, which indeed is *quickly ſhot*, but blindfold and at random, without much aim or force, with a dark Eye, and with an unſteddy Hand, and accordingly with little Execution. That 'tis in ſhort an Ill Man that deſpiſes him, (for with the Good he is in better Repute,) one whoſe Judgment is of no Authority, whoſe Repreſentations of things are always otherwiſe than their Natures, and whoſe Good Word is the trueſt Defamation. One that is utterly Blind and Ignorant, as not being illuminated by the *true Light*, that lives and walks in Darkneſs, that underſtands neither God nor himſelf, nor his Fellow-Creatures, that has all over falſe Ideas of Greatneſs and Goodneſs, of Honour and Diſhonour, of Shame and Glory, whoſe Notions and Characters of things are croſs and tranſpoſed, that calls Evil Good, and Good Evil, that puts Darkneſs for Light, and Light for Darkneſs, Bitter for Sweet, and Sweet for Bitter, that confounds every thing, and underſtands nothing as he ought, the moſt *Miſtaken* Creature in the World. This is the true Character of Wicked Men, that which the Scripture gives of them, that which their whole Conduct Juſtifies and Confirms, and that which they themſelves own and take upon them, ſome of them in this World, as often as they are

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ſo happy as to *Repent*, and all of them in the other World, where they ſhall recant and tranſpoſe their former Sentences, and with regret ſay, *We Fools thought his Life Madneſs*. Error is the true Original Cauſe of all the Sin and Miſery that is in the World, and 'tis nothing but Ignorance and Miſtake that makes Wicked Men Will and Act amiſs. They are in the dark, and have not a clear view either of their *End* or of their *Way*; and 'tis that which makes them ſo often ſtumble and wander. They chuſe and Practice ill, becauſe at that inſtant it ſeems good to them, (for Evil as ſuch is not Eligible) and therefore it ſeems good to them, becauſe they are *Deceived*. They do not ſufficiently attend to the Nature, Moment, Relations and Conſequences of things; they do not view them in a good Light, nor it may be with good Eyes, which being imbued with the Colours of Luſt and Prejudice, derive the like Tincture upon the Object; they have not their Thoughts and Conſiderations about them, nor do they ſee to the end of their Actions: And hence 'tis that they paſs falſe Judgments, and take ill Meaſures; that their whole Life (like an ill-compoſed Diſcourſe,) runs all along upon wrong Principles and miſtaken Reaſonings, and is all over Fallacy and *Paralogiſm*; that they

they are nothing but Error, Darkneſs and Confuſion; whereof they give ſufficient Demonſtration in all their Diſcourſes and in all their Actions, but none ſo plain and convincing, as when they ridicule and vilifie thoſe Perſons who deſerve the greateſt Honour and Reverence, when they deride and blaſpheme the brighteſt Image, the Divineſt Appearance of God in Man, and are *Deſpiſers of thoſe that are good.*

The Words are the worſt part of an ill Character of a bad ſort of Men that ſhould riſe up in the Church, or rather againſt it in the latter Ages of the World, when through the Degeneracy of Human Nature, Chriſtian Piety ſhould not only ſuffer a great *Decay*, and be at a low Ebb, but even fall under downright Contempt, and its Profeſſors with it; when Goodneſs ſhould not only grow out of faſhion, but into ſhame; when Religion ſhould be diſcountenanc'd and laugh'd off the Stage; and when the Impudent Harden'd Tranſgreſſor, not content to walk in the *Counſel* of the Ungodly, or to ſtand in the *Way* of Sinners, ſhould advance to the higheſt pitch of Impiety, to the very Ridge of Deviliſm, and take the *Chair* of the Scornful, making his Mocks at God and Religion, and throwing that Contempt upon Goodneſs and Good Men, which is due only

only to himſelf, and his own Wickedneſs and Folly.

Whether we are not now entring upon the Line of this Cloudy Interval of theſe latter and more degenerate days, whether the preſent Age be not concern'd in this black Character, I ſhall leave to be conſider'd by thoſe who ſhall obſerve that prophane Humour and Irreligious Genius that appears ſo viſible in it, and ſeems to make up its very Ayr and Complexion; while in the mean time I chuſe rather to proceed to the Conſideration of the Words before me, which making the Contempt of Good Men one of the Marks of a Wicked and Profligate Age, do thereby imply, that Good Men do not deſerve the Contempt of Wicked Men, but rather their greateſt Honour and Eſteem: That nevertheleſs 'tis their Lot ſometimes to fall under it, and that the Age is moſt abominably Wicked and Corrupt when they do ſo. So that we have here Three things to conſider,

1. That Honour and Reverence which is due to Good Men.

2. That Contempt which they do really meet with.

3. The heinous injuſtice and impiety of all ſuch Contempt.

1. We

1. We are to conſider *that Honour and Reverence which is due to good Men.* Whereof that we may take a juſt Account, it will be neceſſary to lay open the true Ground and Foundation of Honour in general, which when duly ſtated and placed upon a right bottom, will be a Meaſure to direct us in our Judgment of that Honour which belongs to Good Men, to inform us whether they are truly Honourable or no, and to what degree they are ſo. Now I ſuppoſe that God is the only true Fountain and Original of all Honour, according to that acknowledgment we are taught to make to him in our daily Prayers, *Thine is the Kingdom, the Power and the Glory*; and that Confeſſion of the Elders in the *Revelations*, who are brought in caſting their Crowns down before the Throne, and ſaying, Rev. 4. 11. *Worthy art thou O Lord to receive Glory, Honour, and Power.* By which Expreſſion joyn'd to that Devotional and Reverential act of theirs, in caſting their Crowns before the Throne, they plainly acknowledge God to be the only true Fountain and Original of all Honour, and that it was from this great Sun of the Intellectual World that they receiv'd every Ray of their Celeſtial Light and Glory. And therefore it was that they caſt their Crowns before the Throne; the very ſame Homage that every

every inferior Magiſtrate or Major of a City pays to the King, in delivering up to him his Scepter or Mace (the Inſign of his Honour,) when he paſſes through the Corporation. And by this the King is acknowledg'd to be the only Foundation of all Civil Honour and Power, that is, the only viſible one, the higheſt Fountain of it that riſes upon Earth. But this is only in a Secondary Senſe, and in a Subordinate and Derivative way. For this Fountain, has alſo its Fountain, and muſt be traced up to a higher Original, even to him by *whom Kings reign, and Princes decree Juſtice.*

But now if God be the true Fountain of all Honour, (which I ſuppoſe is a Principle that will readily find admittance, wherever the Notion of God does,) it will then follow that *Creatures* are no further Honourable, than as they partake of his Excellency and Perfection; no further than as in ſome meaſure they repreſent God; even as an inferior Magiſtrate is no further honourable in a civil reſpect, than as he partakes of the Power, and repreſents the Perſon of the King. That therefore which ſtamps any Perſon with a Character of Dignity, and makes him truly honourable, muſt be ſome real Excellence or other either Inhering or Adhering, either Moral, Intellectual or Political, where-

by he reſembles God, or ſome Perfection of the Divine Nature. Thus thoſe who are in Power or Authority, and are Honourable, as repreſenting and partaking of the Sovereign Regality of God; thoſe that have great Intellectual Indowments, that are Knowing and Learned, are ſo far Honourable, as repreſenting the Wiſdom of God; and ſo alſo thoſe that are Good, (as we ſhall further ſee by and by) are Honourable, as reſembling and repreſenting the Goodneſs of God, the excellent and immutable Order and Regularity of the Divine Will. So much of God as appears in any Man, or in any Creature, ſo much as he has of what is *Divine*, ſo far he is truly Honourable, ſo far he is honour'd by God, and ſo far he ought to be honoured and reſpected by his Fellow-Creatures. And the greater that Perfection is whereby any Perſon reſembles God, and the more he has of it, the greater will the Honour be which thence redounds to him, becauſe he is thereby ſuppoſed to reſemble God ſo much the more. And upon this Account, we ſhall find it further neceſſary to conclude, that the more this Excellency or Perfection is our own, the more Right and Property we have in it, the more its acquiſition depends upon the uſe of our *Free Will*, ſtill the more honourable will it render the Poſ-

ſeſſors

ſeſſors of it, and the greater reſpect will be due to them, becauſe therein they do yet more reſemble God, as repreſenting not only this or that of his particular Perfections, but alſo in ſome ſort that general one of his *Aſeity* or *Independency*.

Theſe are the true Grounds of all that Honour which is Natural and Real, which is founded in Reaſon and Senſe, and does not depend upon the arbitrary Humours and unaccountable Fancies of Unprincipl'd Men. It all reſolves into ſome reſemblance of God, ſome Participation of the Divine Nature, ſome Excellence or Perfection that carries a Repreſentation of the Supream Good, ſome Image or Appearance of God in Man. That Perſon who has any thing of this, (as all Men have in ſome degree or other,) is ſo far honourable; and he that has moſt of it, in whom the Glory of the Divinity does moſt brightly ſhine, in whom there is the greateſt Appearance of God, he it is that is moſt Honourable. Whereupon *Jeſus Chriſt* being (as the Author to the *Hebrews* tells us, Heb. 1. 3.) the *Brightneſs* of his Father's *Glory*, and the *Expreſs Image* of his *Perſon*, comes to have a right to the Greateſt and moſt Superlative Honour, and that even in reſpect of his Human Nature, which upon the account of its intimate Union with, and more Plen-

tiful Participation of the Divine, is become more Honourable than the moſt Glorious Creatures. So that even the *Man* Chriſt Jeſus is really more honourable than the moſt Exalted Seraphim, *being* (as the ſame Apoſtle tells us,) Ver. 4. *made ſo much better than the Angels, as he has by inheritance obtain'd a more excellent Name than they.*

The grounds of Honour thus briefly open'd, we have in the ſame view a Diſcovery of that particular Right which the Good Man has to it; for 'tis very certain and undeniable, that the foregoing Meaſures are truly and highly applicable to him; that he has ſuch Excellencies and Perfections of Mind, as reſemble and expreſs thoſe of the Divine Nature; that he is in his Proportion (as the Son of God is in his,) ἀπαύγασμα τῆς δόξης, an *Effulgency*, an *Eradiation* of God's Glory, and χαρακτὴρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως, a *Character*, an *Impreſſion* of his Subſtance, a Living Idea and Repreſentation of the moſt Perfect Being, and that there is a very great and Eminent Appearance of God in him; which muſt needs give him a more than ordinary Title to Honour and Reſpect.

'Tis true indeed there is ſomething of this in every Man, as being made in the Image, and after the Likeneſs of God; upon which account

account it is, that a Meaſure of Honour is due to every Man, according to that injunction of the Apoſtle, 1 Pet. 2. 17. *Honour all Men.* There is it ſeems a certain Reverence due to Human Nature, and Man as Man is Honourable, and conſequently every Man may juſtly challenge a part in our Reſpect and Eſteem. For let a Man be otherwiſe never ſo vile and unworthy in himſelf, his Nature will always be good and excellent, which he will never be able ſo to debauch or diſhonour, but that it will ſtill bear the Image and Superſcription of God, (however blotted and ſtain'd;) and as long as it does ſo, ſome degrees of Reverence will be due to it.

But this Image of God which is Legible in every Man, is bright and ſhining in him that is Good; like a Picture that not only retains ſo much of the Fundamental Draught, as to diſcover whom it was intended for, but whoſe Features are diſtinct and plain, the Proportion juſt, the Colours freſh, and the whole Ayr approaching to *Life.* The Divine Likeneſs does more eminently appear and ſhine forth with a more ſtrong and perpendicular Ray in a Good Man, who reſembles and repreſents God, not only as to the Eſſentials of his Nature, but the Order and Rectitude of it, partaking with him not only in the Spirituality of his Eſ-

sence, but in that which renders him more Divine, Lovely and Adorable, the *Morality* of his *Will*. This is the brightest side of the Divine Image, and here it is that a Good Man does more particularly resemble God, as being *renew'd in the Spirit of his Mind, and having put on the New Man, which after God is Created in Righteousness and true Holiness*, Eph. 4. 23. So that he is doubly Partaker of the Divine Nature, and carries a Two-fold Representation of his Creator, personates him in his *Moral* as well as *Natural* Character, and has therefore an Accumulative Title to our Reverence and Esteem, and is worthy of *Double Honour*.

Goodness is indeed the best *Patent* for Honour; and there is no Man who upon a serious and rational Estimation of things, will appear so truly Honourable as the Good Man, and that whether we respect

First, The greatness of the Perfection he is possess'd of; or

Secondly, His Right and Property in it.

First, If we respect *the greatness of the Perfection he is possessed of*. He resembles God in his best and greatest Perfection, that for which God seems most to value himself, and that for which we most admire and adore God, that is, his *Goodness*. Neither the Spirituality, nor the Immensi-

ty,

ty, nor the Wiſdom, nor the Power, nor all the Attributes of God put together, repreſent him either ſo lovely or ſo glorioufly as this ſingle one of his Goodneſs, as the Moral part of his Nature. This is his Grandeur and his Glory, and that which he moſt glories in, and is concern'd to vindicate. *I will make all my Goodneſs paſs before thee*, Exod. 33. 19. ſays he to *Moſes* when he deſired a view of his Glory, implying that his Goodneſs was really his greateſt Glory. And we do not find God any where concern'd to juſtifie his Wiſdom or his Power, but we find him making a Solemn Appeal to the Sons of Men concerning his Goodneſs and the Morality of his Conduct, *Hear now*, ſays he, *O Houſe of* Iſrael, *is not my Way equal?* Ezek. 18. 25. He ſeems ſo jealous of the Equity of his Proceedings, and ſo tender (as it were) of his Reputation in this Point, as to be concern'd to convince Men of it; and one main end of the Day of Judgment, is to give the World publick Satisfaction of this, which is therefore call'd *the Day of the Revelation of the Righteous Judgment of God*, Rom. 2. 5. Now this being that Perfection of God which is of greateſt Excellence, and that wherein the good Man particularly reſembles him, the *Court of Honour* muſt not take it amiſs, if upon this account we conclude the Good

Man more truly honourable than any of thoſe who upon the Score of their Birth, Quality, Fortune, or any other Pretence aſſume that Title. All the other Sons of Honour repreſent ſome lower Perfections of God, as the Man of Knowledge and Learning repreſents the Wiſdom of God, the Man of Quality his Greatneſs, the Man of Strength his Power, and the Man of Authority his Regality; but the Good Man repreſents the Morality of his Nature, his Goodneſs and Righteouſneſs which is the Flower of his Perfections, that which brings moſt Honour and Glory to himſelf, and conſequently to the Man who in this part reſembles him.

This I know runs very croſs to the common Meaſures of the World, where to be reckon'd a Man of Parts and Learning, is thought more honourable than to have the Character of Goodneſs and Integrity; and accordingly when we hear the Name of a *Worthy* Man given to any one, there preſently riſes in our Minds an Idea of great Parts or Learning, as if that were at leaſt the greateſt, if not the only Worth; and upon the ſame Principle the Name of Fool is worſe reſented than that of Knave; and that which only *queſtions* our Senſe, or Capacity, is thought more to reflect upon our Honour, than that which even Reproaches

proaches our Honeſty. But all this is carried out by meer Confidence and Aſſurance, by Number and Vote, without Reaſon or Principle; for there is more of God in the Man that is Good and Virtuous, than in him that is Knowing and Learned; and therefore alſo a greater Right and Title to Honour. Not but that even in reſpect of real Senſe and Underſtanding, the Good Man might ſtand upon a level with him, ſince by the wiſe Government of himſelf, and diſcreet Conduct of his Life, he gives the beſt demonſtration of *Intellectual Light*, according to that of St. *James*, *Who is a Wiſe Man, and indued with Knowledge among you, let him ſhew it out of a good Converſation.* But to wave this Conſideration at preſent, it may ſuffice to give our Good Man the Preference of Honour in his Competition with the Learned, Great, Powerful or any other; that he reſembles and repreſents God according to a more noble Perfection than any of them do. And thus is he more honourable in reſpect of the greatneſs of the Perfection he is poſſeſſed of. As alſo

Secondly, *In reſpect of his Right and Property in it.* The more there is of this in any good or perfection a Man has, the more Honour will redound to him from it; becauſe (as was remark'd above,) he there-

thereby comes to have a nearer Reſemblance of God in reſpect of his *Independence*. Now if there be any Perfection which a Man has a Right and Property in, and may call his *own*, it is his Goodneſs and Virtue, as reſulting from the free determination of his Will, the only thing either without him, or within him that he has in his Power. 'Tis true indeed a Mans Virtue is not ſo his own, as to exclude the *Grace* of God, to whoſe concurrence and cooperation all our good Habits and Performances muſt be principally aſcribed; but yet 'tis moſt certain that 'tis in ſeveral reſpects much more his own, than any of thoſe other things upon which Men generally value themſelves, and expect to be reverenc'd and eſteem'd by others. The Goods of Fortune are wholly without a Man, and the Goods of the Body are in the worſer part of him; and the Goods of the Mind though inherent in him, and in the better part of him too, yet they are none of them ſo much of and from himſelf, ſo much in his own Power and Diſpoſal as his Goodneeſs and Virtue. Men are born to Greatneſs, and they inherit Nobility; and a good Temper of the Blood and Spirits, with a happy Contexture of the Brain, makes them Witty and Ingenious; but they are Virtuous by *Choice*, and Goodneſs

is of their own acquiring, and depends all the way upon the free determination of their own Wills. In which reſpect Good Men have a new and peculiar Title to Honour, in as much as they repreſent not only a greater Perfection of God, *viz.* his *Goodneſs*, but in a more perfect and Excellent Manner, ſuch as in ſome Meaſure expreſſes the *Independency* of the Divine Nature.

Indeed upon the whole matter, a good Man is the greateſt *Repreſentative* of God upon Earth; he repreſents the beſt and greateſt of his Perfections, and after the moſt Divine way and manner. He is Poſſeſſed of the greateſt Good, and he has it in ſome Meaſure from *Himſelf*, and may truly call it his own, it being partly owing to the good uſe he has made of his Natural Powers. His Body is a Living Temple of the Holy Ghoſt, and his Soul a reaſoning Image of the whole Trinity; and both together make up a Bleſſed Member of Chriſt, and an *Habitation of God through the Spirit*, Eph. 2. 22. For God properly dwells in a Good Man, and a Good Man has alſo his Dwelling in God; according to that of St. *John*, *He that dwelleth in Charity, dwelleth in God, and God in him.* He is indeed the moſt Glorious Temple that the Divinity has next to the Sacred Humanity of Jeſus Chriſt; the Divine *Shecinah* reſts upon him, and the

the Glory of God ſhines forth in him, as it did of old in the Jewiſh Tabernacle. And as God dwells in him, ſo he loves him, and delights in him, and in him only. For 'tis neither Greatneſs nor Wealth, Wit nor Learning, nor any thing of meer Human Extraction, that can recommend us to God, or make us amiable or honourable in his Eyes. Theſe things indeed are all in all with the World, but they are of no account with him; God regards nothing in us but his own Image, which conſiſts in Righteouſneſs and true Holineſs, and this he can find no where upon Earth, but in a Good Man; and there he finds it, loves it, and honours it. For the good Man follows the Will, and conforms to the Order of God, the frame of his Mind is rightly diſpoſed, and the Strings of his Soul well in Tune; that which is the Meaſure of the Divine Will, is the Rule alſo of his Eſſential Order and Juſtice, he wills that which is ſimply and abſolutely beſt, without being ſway'd by any by, private, or ſelf-regards; is above all little ſneaking Deſigns or unworthy Projectings; is indued with a Spirit of Univerſal Love, *ſeeks* the good of all Mankind, and heartily *rejoyces* in the Welfare of every Creature. Men may talk of Gallantry, Bravery and Honour, and ſuch like Romantick Worthineſs,

thineſs, but when all's done, Goodneſs is the moſt generous and noble thing in the World; and could we but ſee into the Breaſt of him that has it, we ſhould need no further Argument to recommend him to our Eſteem; the very Idea of his Excellence, (like that of *Virtue* it ſelf,) would extort from us the greateſt Veneration for him: Thus it would be if the inſide of a Good Man were laid open, *Si his Oculis*, &c. But as the cauſe now ſtands, 'tis eaſier to demonſtrate that eminent Right which good Men have to Honour, than to perſuade a ſtupid and diſingenious World, that is influenc'd only by ſenſible Appearances, to treat them with that Reverence and Reſpect which they juſtly deſerve: Which leads me to conſider

2. *That Contempt which they do really meet with.* Deſpiſed and Rejected of Men, which was one of the moſt diſtinguiſhing Characters of the Son of God, is and always will be in ſome meaſure the Lot and Portion of all his Diſciples and Followers, who muſt bear and carry after their Maſter this part of his Croſs, whatever other Portion of it they have the Forune to eſcape. The World was never yet ſo good, (and I'm afraid never will be on this ſide the *Millennium*,) but that Wicked Men had always by much the Majority on their ſide; and they

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are eaſily tempted to deſpiſe thoſe whom they can ſo eaſily *out-vote*, and whom they are withal reſolv'd never to *imitate*. They are all ingaged in an oppoſite Party, and have eſpouſed a contrary cauſe, and ſo are obliged in their own Juſtification, to deſpiſe them to whoſe Order they will not be brought over, and as far as they can to render them Contemptible. The Principle upon which they act, makes it their Intereſt ſo to do, and they of all Men are the moſt conſiſtent with their Principles: Whence 'tis that the Children of this World are in their Generation Wiſer than the Children of Light. So that upon grounds of common Probability, a Good Man can hardly expect any other Treatment from the Hands of Ill Men than Scorn and Contempt: And accordingly 'tis what he generally meets with. But this being matter of Fact, can be directly proved by no other Argument than Obſervation and Experience, which truly is ſo well furniſhed with inſtances of this nature, that there needs no other. For certainly that Man muſt either have been a great Stranger to the World, or have been very happy in the fortune of his Company, who ſhall need to be told of the Contempt and Diſ-reſpect (not to ſay any thing of groſſer Abuſes and Indignities) that the Good

Good Man meets with abroad as his ordinary Entertainment. That his Awful Senſe of God is reproached as Cowardice; that his Piety and Devotion towards him, goes for Softneſs; that his Conſcientious Strictneſs, is term'd Preciſeneſs; that his Honeſty and Sincerity is from want of Parts, and becauſe he underſtands not Men; that his Temperance is Unſociableneſs; his Quietneſs and Inoffenſiveneſs, Lowneſs of Spirit; his Gravity, Pride and Moroſcneſs of Humour: In a Word, that all his good Qualities are Miſconſtrued and Nick-named, and the Good Man himſelf all over Vilified and Ridiculed.

The truth is, *He* and *Religion* are the Two Subjects in *Reſerve* for Drollery and Divertiſement to moſt lewd Companies, the laſt Refuge of exhauſted Humour, and of a ſpent Invention; when their Fancy flags, and the Vein of their Wit and Mirth runs low, when their Sleepy Spirits want a *Provocative*, and the Glaſs and their Jollity are both at a ſtand, then at a dead lift comes in Religion, or ſome Good Man or other, (and if one of the Sacred Character, ſo much the better,) to quicken their drooping Mirth, and to ſet a new edge upon their Wit; and then their Imagination teems and ferments afreſh, and the Men are *awake* and *alive* again. Theſe things

things are ſo notorious and unqueſtionable, that they need more to be lamented and reform'd than to be proved; and therefore I ſhall beſtow upon this part only this further Remark, that there is one thing that mightily argues both the Reality and the Greatneſs of that Contempt which is uſually caſt upon Good Men, as being the deplorable Effect and Conſequence of it, and that is, (who would ever imagin it?) *the ſhame of doing well.* Strange I confeſs it is, that Men ſhould be aſhamed of that which is the greateſt Perfection of their Beings, and the true Glory of their Natures; and yet ſo it falls out, there is many a Man who has an excellent Temper of Spirit, very Pious Reliſhes of God, and whoſe Heart ſtands very well diſpoſed to Religion; nay, he is very full of it, and would fain give it vent, and unburthen himſelf of it in good and pious Diſcourſe, but he is aſhamed, but he dares not, for fear of appearing Singular and out of Faſhion, Odd and Ridiculous, of being thought *Guilty* of Devotion; and therefore (as one that was under the like Paſſion confeſſes of himſelf,) *he holds his Tongue and ſpeaks nothing*; *he keeps Silence, yea, even from good Words*; tho at the ſame time it be *Pain* and *Grief* to him. Now tho this is not at all to be excuſed in Good Men, who

who by this their Shamefacedneſs and Backwardneſs to own and acknowledge their Character and Profeſſion, do too much Honour and Countenance to the Cenſures of Ill Men; yet this is a plain Argument of the Truth of what we are now Diſcourſing, a convincing ſign of that geneneral Scorn and Contempt which the profeſſion and appearance of Goodneſs expoſes Men to, as being the unhappy conſequence of that Contempt. For why is it that Good Men are aſhamed to expreſs that *outwardly*, which *inwardly* they ſo much admire and approve, and to appear as Religious as indeed they are, but becauſe of that Ignominy and Contempt which ordinarily inſues upon ſuch an Appearance? as a Man would be aſhamed to go Abroad in an Old-faſhion'd Habit, though never ſo Rich and Good, and to his own liking, for fear of being ſtared upon, and laugh'd at. And this truly is the hard caſe of Good Men; the World is grown ſo corrupt, and Goodneſs has ſo few Friends in it, that Good Men are fain to hide and conceal the rich Attire and precious Furniture of their Minds, and to wear a *Diſguiſe* over it, for fear if they ſhould appear in their own Native Dreſs, they ſhould draw upon them the Eyes and the Laughter of the the Rabble, who would take them for

Fools and *Anticks*. By what Reaſonings and Conſiderations, our Good Man may be aſſiſted to deſpiſe and overlook this abſurd and unworthy Treatment, has been already ſuggeſted in the entrance of this Diſcourſe; it will be time now to conſider

3. *The heinous Injuſtice and Impiety of all ſuch Contempt.* The grounds of this are ſufficiently laid already in what we have diſcours'd upon the Firſt Head, concerning that Honour and Reverence which is due to Good Men. For if Good Men are really ſo honourable and worthy of reſpect, as is there repreſented, then it muſt needs follow, that 'tis a very great piece of Injuſtice and Impiety to deſpiſe them. It is ſo indeed to deſpiſe any Man, for all Men are in ſome meaſure honourable, as far as they repreſent him, who is the Fountain of all Honour, and no Man abſolutely to be deſpiſed; and therefore ſays *Solomon*, *He that is void of Wiſdom, deſpiſes his Neighbour*. Prov. 11. 12. Whatever therefore the Witty Men of the Age may think, 'tis no great ſign of Wiſdom in the Judgment of him who was ſo great a Maſter of it, to deſpiſe any Man. But to deſpiſe a Good Man, one that of all Men has the beſt and moſt unqueſtionable Right and Title to *Honour*, is the moſt

moſt unprincipled piece of Folly, the groſſeſt Injuſtice, the moſt Colourleſs and Pretenceleſs Impiety imaginable. There is nothing in the whole Univerſe truly contemptible but an Ill Man, nor he any further than as he declines from that great and fundamental meaſure of Honour, the Image and Reſemblance of God; and ſo far indeed there is no one degree of Contempt but what is juſtly due to him. If therefore Wicked Men are for deſpiſing, if they muſt needs exerciſe their Scorn and Contempt, let it be upon *themſelves*, the only deſpicable part of the Creation. But to deſpiſe Good Men, thoſe who are worthy of the greateſt Honour and Reverence, thoſe whom God himſelf moſt honours, and in whom is the greateſt Appearance of his Divinity, thoſe who repreſent him in his beſt and nobleſt Perfections, who are Partakers of his Divine Nature, Members of his Son, Temples of his Spirit, and Heirs of his Eternal Kingdom; what an Injuſtice, what an Impiety muſt this be! God has but one particular Repreſentative upon Earth, ſince the Aſſumption of his Son, and ſhall that be ſingled out by Wicked and Diſſolute Men to be the ſubject of their Deriſion and Contempt?

The Scripture takes notice of it as a very

irreligious Symptom in *Michal*, 1 Chron. 15. 29. that ſhe deſpiſed *David* in her Heart, when ſhe ſaw him by way of Feſtival Solemnity, Dancing and Playing before the Ark of God; and if in this ſhe is ſuppoſed to have betrayed great Levity and Prophaneneſs of Spirit, much more would ſhe have done ſo, if ſhe had deſpiſed him, when he was ingaged in an immediate act of Religion, when he was upon his Knees at Prayers, and tuning his Harp and Himſelf to a Devotional Hymn or Hallelujah. 'Tis great Profaneneſs to deſpiſe any thing that never ſo remotely relates to God, and carries in any degree the face of Religion; (upon which account by the way, I think it a very unjuſtifiable Practice to ridicule or make a Mockery of what the moſt miſtaken Sect of Men calls *Divine Worſhip*;) but to make light of that wherein the Honour of God is more immediately concern'd, to undervalue pure and undefiled Religion, to mock at Righteouſneſs and true Holineſs, to ridicule that glorious *Image* and *Life* of God upon Earth, which the Angels adore in Heaven; what Impiety can be compared with this? It muſt be a great Affront to the Infinite Majeſty of God, to deſpiſe any part of the *Natural Creation*, (there being nothing in it but what

is

is form'd according to the Living Exemplars of the Eternal and uncreated Wiſdom, who is the *Idea* of all the Creatures) but to deſpiſe the Supernatural Product of his Spirit, the Workmanſhip of his Grace, the moſt Divine Image of his Son; what an Indignity muſt this be to him! what an Abominable, I had almoſt ſaid *Unpardonable* Offence againſt him! How nearly is his Majeſty and Honour concern'd in it! and how ſeverely do we think will he ſit in Judgment againſt it in the great Day of Diſtinction and Recompence, when he ſhall be glorified in his Saints, and upon his Enemies, particularly thoſe his bold and impudent Adverſaries, who are *Deſpiſers of them that are good!*

Behold then *ye Deſpiſers, and wonder and periſh* in that great and laſt Day of Deciſion, when Religion and Piety ſhall be publickly honoured and rewarded, and the Righteous ſhall ſtand in great Boldneſs before the Face of ſuch as have afflicted him, and made no account of him or his Labours. And when the Wicked repenting and groaning for Anguiſh of Spirit, ſhall ſay within themſelves, this was he whom we had ſometimes in Deriſion, and a Proverb of Reproach: We Fools accounted his Life Madneſs, and his End to be without Honour. But how

is he number'd among the Children of God, and his Lot is among the Saints! The Scene is now ſtrangely alter'd, and the ſtate of things revers'd and turned upſide down. Virtue that was before deſpiſed, is now the only thing in Credit and Honour, and that dares lift up its Head; and Vice that was before applauded, flatter'd and court-ed and feared, now ſneaks and trembles, and inherits Eternal Shame and Confuſi-on. Conſider this, ye that forget God, and deſpiſe his Worſhip, and thoſe that ſerve him, and that are ſo dear to him, and turn your Contempt into Honour and Eſteem; for how meanly ſoever you may think of Good Men, God in the mean while has another notion of them; and know this, that you cannot think ſo meanly of them, as God thinks of you, and as you will one Day think of your ſelves. In the mean time conſider what your Judge ſays, *Take heed that ye deſpiſe not one of theſe little ones; for I ſay unto you, that in Heaven their An-gels do always behold the Face of my Father which is in Heaven*, Mat. 18. 10.

The Reſult then of the whole is this, that we endeavour to judge of things, not according to Popular Meaſures, but ac-cording to true and juſt Ideas, and render to Good Men that Honour and Reverence which is due to that glorious Image of God

which

which ſhines in them, and have a care of treating any Man with Scorn and Contempt, leſt it ſhould happen to light upon a Good Man; but moſt of all how we deſpiſe them whom we know to be Good: Whom we ought to Love, Reverence and Eſteem, and for whom we ought to Praiſe and Glorify God, to whom be Glory henceforth and for ever. *Amen.*

A

DISCOURSE

OF

The ſeveral ways whereby God Addreſſes himſelf to Man.

Prov. 8. 1, 4, 5.

Doth not wiſdom cry? and underſtanding put forth her voice?

Unto you, O men, I call, and my voice is to the ſons of men.

O ye ſimple, underſtand wiſdom, and ye fools, be ye of an underſtanding heart.

WHEN a Man ſhall ſeriouſly conſider and compare the vaſtly different States of the two Worlds, the *Natural* and the *Moral*, how regular and full

full of Order the Natural is, where the Laws of Motion are not more excellent and perfect than the Execution of them is punctual and exact; where Bodies of all manner of Sizes, Figures and Contextures move not only regularly and orderly, ſo as to contribute to the Beauty and Perfection of the Univerſe, but alſo with the greateſt Uniformity and Agreement imaginable, the Communication of Motion being always the ſame in the like Accidents and Rencounters of Bodies all the World over; I ſay, when a Man ſhall conſider this, and at the ſame time ſhall reflect upon the State of the *Moral* World, how all over irregular and diſorderly this is, how corrupt the Wills and Practices of Men are, how little the ſacred Rules of Morality are obſerv'd, which are yet as neceſſary to the well being of Society, as the Laws of Motion are to the Order of Nature. And withal how various and diſuniform this irregular Motion of Human Will is, every Man almoſt ſetting up for himſelf, and directing his Courſe a ſeveral way, acting upon a different Principle, and for a different End, ſo that there ſeems to be ſcarce any other Agreement in their Motions but the *common Diſorder* of them; ſuch a Conſideration as this would almoſt tempt one to think, that either theſe two Worlds had

had not one and the ſame Author, or at leaſt that he was a very partial and unequal Parent, that he ſet a greater Value upon the Natural than upon the Moral World, and had more regard for the Orderly Motion of *Bodies*, than for the Regular Love of *Spirits*.

Thus indeed a Man would be tempted to imagin, that ſhould only conſider the different States of theſe two Worlds in themſelves, without proceeding to enquire into God's Diſpenſations towards them, and how far he has intereſs'd himſelf in the Conduct and Regulation of their reſpective Motions. But by that time this is well look'd into and conſider'd, there will appear ſufficient reaſon for the laying down that Prejudice which upon the other Conſideration he took up, ſufficient to convince him that God is not ſuch a partial and unequal Parent as at firſt he was apt to imagin, but that he is no leſs concern'd for the Order of the *Moral* World, than for that of the *Natural*, and has taken as much care (as far as the Capacity of the Subject would allow) for the Regulation of the former, as for that of the latter. That he has applied himſelf to both in a Meaſure proportionable to their Natures, and has been aſſiſtant to them as far as they were capable; That he has made all proviſion imaginable

both

both for the Diſcovery of his Will, and for enforcing Conformity to it, and that there has been nothing wanting on God's part towards the moſt perfect Regulation of the Moral World, notwithſtanding that great and general Diſorder it is now under. For, *Does not Wiſdom cry? And Underſtanding put forth her Voice? Unto you, O Men, I call, my Voice is to the Sons of Men. O ye Simple, underſtand Wiſdom, and ye Fools be of an underſtanding Heart.*

The Words are already divided, and ſtand in a poſture fit for Diſcourſe; for in the firſt Verſe we have a ſolemn Declaration or Admonition of the Divine λόγος, the Eternal and Subſtantial Wiſdom of God, *Doth not Wiſdom cry? And Underſtanding put forth her Voice?* In the ſecond we have the Perſons to whom this Admonition is directed: *Unto you, O Men, I call, my Voice is to the Sons of Men.* In the third Verſe we have the Matter of this ſolemn Admonition: *O ye Simple, underſtand Wiſdom, and ye Fools, be ye of an underſtanding Heart.* Theſe are the Parts into which the Words are naturally laid out; but not loving to clog my Diſcourſe with unneceſſary Diviſions, I ſhall caſt the two firſt into one, and ſo ſhall conſider

1. An

1. An Admonition or Addreſs of the Eternal Wiſdom to the World, or to Mankind.

2. The Matter of this Addreſs.

3. The great Concern that lies upon the World to attend to and comply with this Divine Addreſs.

The firſt thing we have here to conſider is, an Admonition or Addreſs of the Eternal Wiſdom to the World. I ſay of the *Eternal Wiſdom*, for that no other can be meant by (Wiſdom) in this place, than the ſubſtantial and eſſential Wiſdom of God, the Divine λόγος, the ſecond Perſon of the Trinity, who is the true intelligible World, and in whom is both the *Life* and the *Light* of all Spirits, muſt needs appear ſo unqueſtionably evident to any one that ſhall but glance over the Coherence of this Chapter, that I may well be allow'd to take it for granted, and proceed upon it as a *Suppoſition*. This Eternal and uncreated Wiſdom who is the great Luminary of the whole Intellectual World, the Wiſdom of his Father, and the Light of Men, by whom, as the Author to the *Hebrews* tells us, God made the Worlds, and by whom he upholds and ſuſtains all things. This ſame Eternal Wiſdom I ſay being in proceſs of time to be made Fleſh, and to take upon him human Nature,

Nature, has all along upon the proſpect as it were of that near Alliance he was to contract with us, ſhewn a particular regard for the Children of Men, and applied himſelf to them in a various manner for their Diſcipline and Inſtruction throughout the ſeveral Ages of the World. And indeed who ſo proper for this Office, as he who was in the Eternal *Syſtem* of the Divine Counſel to be the Repairer and Reſtorer of Human Nature, the Reconciler and Mediator between God and Man, and the great Teacher and Prophet of the World, and who withal was to be the King and Head of the Church, and the Judg of Man and Angels, in whoſe Hands the whole Adminiſtration of Providence is lodged, and by whom God now *governs* as at firſt he *made* all things. Who ſo fit to admoniſh and inform the World as he by whom it was firſt made, and afterwards repair'd, and upon whoſe Shoulders (as the Prophet tell us, *Iſa.* 9. 6.) the Government of it is to reſt.

For 'tis to be conſider'd, that this Addreſs of Wiſdom to the World is one Inſtance or Part of *Divine Providence*, of that paternal Care and Concern which God has for the Works of his Hands; which is ſeen partly in preſcribing Laws of Motion to the material World, and in executing

cuting thoſe Laws; partly in ordering and diſpoſing the Events of the Moral World, in governing and controuling the Wills, Counſels, and Actions of Men, in ſetting Bounds to their Wickedneſs, ſaying, *Hitherto ſhalt thou come, and no further*, in bringing Good out of Evil, and the like: And partly in giving Laws and Rules of Action for the Conduct and Regulation of human Life, and in admoniſhing and ſtirring up the Hearts and Wills of Men to a due Conformity with thoſe Laws. In ſpeaking and making application to the rational World, both by telling Men what is their Duty, and by admoniſhing them to do it; by pointing out to them the Path of Life and Happineſs, and by quickening and putting them forward to walk in it. Theſe two laſt are the principal and moſt excellent Parts of Divine Providence, it being a thing of more difficulty to govern a *Rational* than a *Material* World, and withal of greater Conſequence that it ſhould be govern'd. And the laſt of all is the moſt principal of the latter two, it being of greater Conſequence yet, that the Rational World ſhould be govern'd as to its *Actions* as relate to a future State, upon which an Eternity depends, than as to its *Events* and Occurrences which concern only the preſent Political State of things. And accordingly

ingly the Eternal Wiſdom of God, by whom the World is govern'd, and the great Wheel of Providence turn'd round, has all along, and does ſtill make this his particular Concern, to addreſs his Voice to the Sons of Men, to teach and direct, to admoniſh and exhort them in the ways of Righteouſneſs and Peace, that ſo they may live *well* here, and *happily* for ever.

Various are the Ways and Manners whereby God ſpeaks and addreſſes himſelf to Man, as I ſhall endeavour to repreſent in the proceſs of this Diſcourſe; but in the mean time we may here pauſe a while and reflect how different the Method is which God uſes towards the *Rational*, from that which he uſes towards the *Material* World. In the Material World God has not only fix'd and preſcrib'd certain Laws of Motion, according to which the Courſe of Nature ſhall proceed, but is himſelf the ſole and immediate Executor of thoſe Laws. For the Matter being a dead thoughtleſs thing, that has not *Power* ſo much as to move it ſelf, much leſs to move it ſelf regularly and in a way of Order, nor Capacity to underſtand or take notice of any external Rules or Laws of Motion that ſhould be preſcrib'd to it, it would not have been ſufficient for God to have eſtabliſh'd Laws of Motion, though

though never ſo perfect, unleſs he had alſo undertaken the Execution of thoſe Laws which he has ſet himſelf in the Government of Nature. I ſay *ſet himſelf*; for to ſpeak properly, God does not preſcribe Laws of Motion to *Matter* (for to what purpoſe ſhould he give a Law to that which cannot underſtand any) but to *himſelf* in the Government of Matter. 'Tis to himſelf that he has ſet theſe Laws, and 'tis by himſelf too that they are executed. God does here both preſcribe and execute at once; for 'tis he alone that produces and regulates all the Motions of Matter, which of it ſelf is ſo far from being able to move regularly, that it cannot move at all.

Thus God deals with the World of *Bodies*, but thus he does not deal with the World of *Spirits*. He does not here himſelf execute the Laws of *Love*, as he does there himſelf execute the Laws of *Motion*. As he immediately produces, ſo he immediately regulates the Motion of Bodies; but he contents himſelf to preſcribe Laws, to make Rational Applications, to *ſpeak* to Spirits. He ſpeaks to them becauſe they are *Rational*, and can underſtand what he ſays, and he does *but* ſpeak to them becauſe they are *free*. God does not uſe any Violence towards them, or lay any Conſtraint

ſtraint upon them; he will be loved with a Love of Choice and with a Love of Reaſon, with a Love worthy of him, and with a Love worthy of them. For God always treats with his Creatures in a way that is proportionate to their Natures, and accordingly having denied the Power of Thinking to Bodies, he himſelf thinks for them, and with his own immediate Hand conducts and orders all their Motions; but having indued Spirits with Underſtanding and Will, made them rational and free Agents, he treats with them in a rational way, by laying down to them Laws and Precepts, and by ſetting before them rational Motives and Inducemens to Obedience. And this is the Method he uſes towards Man, to whom as a rational Creature he addreſſes himſelf in a rational way, ſetting before him Good and Evil, Life and Death, both his Duty and the Conſequence of doing or not doing it. And tho, as being a Creature of a compounded Nature, the Laws of Motion are immediately and forceably executed upon one part of him, his *Body*, yet God does not thus execute the Laws of Love upon his Spiritual part; no, he deals with that after another manner, here *Wiſdom cries, and Underſtanding puts forth her Voice*, he makes rational

Applications and Addreſſes to this part, he *ſpeaks* to the Soul.

This he does ſeveral Ways, and in ſeveral Manners, and by ſeveral Inſtruments. Man has not more Capacities and Poſſibilities of receiving the Addreſſes of God, than God has Ways of addreſſing himſelf to him. He ſpeaks to him ſleeping, and he ſpeaks to him waking; he ſpeaks to him in Company, and he ſpeaks to him in Solitude; he ſpeaks to his Senſes, and he ſpeaks to his Underſtanding; he ſpeaks to him by Commands, and Promiſes, by Threatnings, by Exhortations, by Admonitions, by Reproofs; nay, (ſo low is he pleas'd to deſcend in his Treaty with us) even by Expoſtulations, and Beſeechings *Why will ye dye*? He is ſo concern'd to ſpeed in his Addreſs, that he becomes a Supplicant to his Creature, and courts the Workmanſhip of his Hands. He ſpeaks to him *within*, and he ſpeaks to him *without*: *Within* by the Dictates of Reaſon, by the Light of inward Truth, and by the ſecret Whiſpers of his Spirit: *Without*, by the viſible Frame and Order of the Creation, wherein not only the Heavens declare the Glory of God, and the Firmament ſhews his Handy-Work, but even the meaneſt Inſect reads him a Lecture of Divinity, and preaches to him a Sermon of Adoration and

and Devotion. By the various Diſpenſations of Providence, by all the Events and Accidents that happen in the World, by his Judgments and by his Mercies, by his Smiles and by his Frowns, by Proſperity and by Adverſity, by the good Examples of good Men, and by the Puniſhments of bad Men, by the Hiſtories of former times, and by the preſent Tranſactions of his own, by the Relations of others, and by his own Experiences, by the ordinary Revolutions of Nature, and by the extraordinary Appearances, by the Growth of Perfection, and Decay of natural Bodies, and by the ſeveral Stages and Periods of his own, by Hunger and Thirſt, by Sickneſs and Death, by the Bills of Mortality, and by the Pomp of Funerals, by Graves and Monuments, Epitaphs and Eſcutcheons, and by *the Mourners that go about the Streets*, by every Clock that he hears ſtrike, by every Bell that he hears ring, by the good Counſels and Admonitions of Friends, by the reading of good Books, and by the hearing of good Sermons, but chiefly by the expreſs Revelation of his Divine Will in the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Teſtament: By *Moſes* and by the Prophets, by Chriſt and by his Apoſtles, by the Law and by the Goſpel.

This laſt is the moſt evident and remarkable way of God's ſpeaking and addreſſing himſelf to Mankind. Here it is that *Wiſdom* does moſt properly and emphatically *cry*, and *Underſtanding put forth her Voice.* For here the Eternal and ſubſtantial Wiſdom that is our true intelligible Light, that enlightens every Man that comes into the World in the ſecret Receſs of his Reaſon, in Condeſcention to Man who is now wholly become ſenſible and carnal, puts on Fleſh, and makes himſelf as it were a *ſenſible Light*, inſtructing us and addreſſing himſelf to us after a ſenſible manner, by Miracles, by wholſom Diſcourſes, by Parables, by familiar Similitudes and Compariſons, and by the moſt prevailing and effectual Sermon of a bright and ſhining Example. And indeed the Incarnation and Revelation of the Son of God with the whole Courſe of his Life and Doctrine, and his myſterious Undertaking for us in that amazing and aſtoniſhing Work of our Redemption by his own Death and Paſſion, is ſuch a loud Call, ſuch an awakening Alarm, ſuch a mighty, ſuch a powerful, and withal ſuch a ſtanding Addreſs from God to the World, that one would think it ſhould not fail of having ſome very conſiderable Influence upon it, but ſhould produce a great and wonderful

wonderful Change in the Lives and Manners of Men. For as hereby God does moſt convincingly and ſenſibly aſſure us that he loves the *Man*, ſo he does with no leſs evidence aſcertain us, by what he has laid upon his own Son, that he will not ſpare the impenitent *Sinner*; who therefore having no Benefit by the Redemption of Chriſt, muſt neceſſarily have the whole weight of God's Diſpleaſure fall upon him, and receive the full ſtroke of his Juſtice, if no Mediator had interpos'd. Only his Condition will in one reſpect be much worſe than ſo, as having neglected ſuch a dear and wonderful Capacity, and Poſſibility of Salvation, and (in the Phraſe of the Author to the *Hebrews*, Heb. 10. 29.) trodden under Foot the Son of God, and counted the Blood of the Covenant an unholy thing, and done in deſpight of the Spirit of Grace. Which Words tho more immediately relating to Revolters and Apoſtates from the Chriſtian Faith, do yet truly concern, and are very applicable to all *impenitent Chriſtians* who neglect to cloſe with thoſe eaſie terms of Salvation which are offer'd them in the Goſpel of Chriſt. Theſe do truly tread under Foot the Son of God, and count the Blood of the Covenant an unholy thing, and do great deſpight to the Spirit of Grace. Upon which Conſide-

ration, as we cannot but wonder that the Goſpel has no better effect, ſo we cannot but conclude that Chriſtianity will be a very ſore *Judgment* to thoſe to whom it does not prove a *Mercy*; and that of all the ſorts of Men in the World, none will have ſuch a terrible Account to make at the laſt Day, as *ill-living Chriſtians*.

And thus have I run through the more viſible and ordinary ways whereby God addreſſes himſelf to Mankind; which becauſe they lie more open and expoſed to view, I content my ſelf only to point out as I go along. But there are yet other very conſiderable ways of God's ſpeaking and applying himſelf to Man, which becauſe leſs obſerv'd and conſider'd, do the more need to be ſpoken to, and to be more particularly inſiſted upon. I therefore further conſider that God ſpeaketh and addreſſes himſelf to Man

1. *By the natural and neceſſary Order and Connexion of things.* I do here firſt of all ſuppoſe (what conſtant experience Witneſſes, and what I preſume no Man will deny,) that there is a Connexion between ſome certain Actions, and ſome certain Conſequences; that ſome Actions are attended with good Conſequences, and ſome with bad ones, that ſome do tend to the Happineſs, and ſome to the Unhappineſs of

of Man, both as to his Private, and as to his Publick Capacity. I ſuppoſe again Secondly, that this Connexion is not Poſitive and Arbitrary, but Natural and Neceſſary, that it is founded upon the Nature and Conſtitution of things, upon the Syſteme of the Natural and Moral World, that is (to expreſs my ſelf more clearly,) that the World being conſtituted as it is, and the Nature and Condition of Man in it, being ſo qualify'd and Circumſtantiated as it is, it is the natural and neceſſary Reſult of ſuch a *Complex Conſtitution* of things, that ſome certain Actions ſhould make for the well-being, and ſome for the ill-being of Man. I ſuppoſe therefore that Human Actions do operate *Phyſically*, and in a way of Natural Caſualty, and that Happineſs or Miſery are the natural and proper Effects of them; and that conſidering the preſent Syſteme of things, ſome *Actions* do as naturally tend to the order or diſorder of the Moral World, as ſome *Motions* do to the order or diſorder of the Natural World. This is the great and only Bottom of Morality, and that which lays a Ground for all the *Natural* Diſtinction that is between Good and Evil, Virtue and Vice, thoſe Actions being called Good which are naturally productive of Good, and thoſe Evil which are as na-

turally productive of Evil: By which account of Good and Evil, it is ſuppoſed both that there is ſuch a Connexion between ſuch Actions and ſuch Conſequences; and withal that this Connexion is Natural and Neceſſary, being founded upon the Nature and Conſtitution of things. Now tho this be a ſufficient Reaſon why we ſhould do ſome Actions and avoid others, becauſe of the good or bad Conſequences that do naturally attend them, yet hitherto God is not ſuppoſed to *ſpeak* to us; nor is the Practice or Omiſſion of theſe Actions ſuppoſed as yet to be bound upon us as a *Law* by any Declaration of his Will. They are indeed in themſelves highly reaſonable to be done or avoided, in regard of their reſpective Conſequences, and ſo a very fit and apt to be made the Matter and Subject of a Law; but as yet that which is requiſite to make them ſo is wanting, God not being as yet ſuppoſed to have made any Declaration of his Will concerning them. But one ſtep further will open to us a Proſpect of that too; for whereas God is the Author of the Nature and Conſtitution of things, he muſt alſo be ſuppoſed to be the Author of all that Connexion which is founded upon it, and reſults from it. If upon ſuch a Conſtitution of Nature, there ariſes a Connexion between

between ſuch Actions and ſuch Conſequences, then ſuppoſing God to be the Author of that *Conſtitution*, he will be alſo the Author of that *Connexion*. As, if upon ſuch a ſtringing and tuning of a *Lute*, ſuch a Motion of the Hand upon it, will be attended with Harmony; then ſuppoſing that 'tis I who have ſo ſtrung and ſet the Lute, 'tis I alſo that am the Author of that Connexion that is between ſuch Motions upon it, and the Harmonicalneſs of its ſound. I therefore ſuppoſe Thirdly, That God (as being the Author of Nature,) is alſo the Author of that Connexion that reſults from it between ſome Actions, and that Good or Evil which follows upon them; and which muſt therefore now no longer be conſider'd as meer Natural *Conſequences*, but as a kind of *Rewards* and *Puniſhments* annex'd to them by the Supream Law-giver, and conſequently that ſuch and ſuch Actions be done or omitted, is now no longer a bare Practical Propoſition or Rational Dictate, (as Mr. *Hobbs* will have it) but ſtrictly and properly a *Law*, God having ſufficiently declared by theſe Rewards and Puniſhments, as by a *Natural Sanction*, that 'tis his Will and Pleaſure that thoſe Actions which are attended with good Conſequences, ſhould be done, and that thoſe which

are

are attended with evil Conſequences ſhould be avoided. Not as if I thought (with ſome) that the Law had its Obligation from the *Sanction*, but that theſe Natural Sanctions are Signs and Declarations of the Will of God, who by them ſpeaks to the World, as a Law-giver what he will have done, and what he will have left undone. And he does alſo

2. *By ſenſible Pleaſure and Pain* : A thing which every Body feels, but few paſs any ſerious Reflection upon; tho to him that will conſider, it will preſently appear, that it reads us a very profitable Lecture, and that there is a *Voice of God* in it. For does not God by the frequent and daily return of theſe Impreſſions, continually put us in mind of the Nature and of the Capacity of our Souls; that we are Thinking Beings, and Beings capable of Happineſs and Miſery, which becauſe we actually feel in ſeveral Degrees, and in ſeveral kinds, we may juſtly think our ſelves capable of in more, tho how far, or in what variety, it be paſt our Comprehenſion exactly to define. Indeed at preſent we are conſcious to our ſelves but of Five different kinds of pleaſing or painful Senſations (God having for the preſent thought convenient to awaken no more than what are neceſſary to the uſe and conduct of this Bodily Life,)

but

but what *Dormant Senſes* we have within us, how many Senſations we are capable of, and to what Degree our Pleaſure or our Pain may be heighten'd, when God ſhall proceed to draw out all the Powers, open all the *Stops*, and awaken the now ſilent Capacities of the Soul, who can tell or imagin? In the mean while by thoſe which God has already awaken'd, he gives us a little Specimen of what further Happineſs or Miſery we are capable, and by that warns and admoniſhes us, that one of theſe Two Senſations will be our Lot hereafter; and conſequently what manner of Perſons we ought to be, in all Holy Converſation and Godlineſs, with what care and exactneſs it concerns us to demean our ſelves in this ſhort Probation, that we may not be Miſerable, but Happy in that State which is *all Happineſs* or *all Miſery*.

Had a Man never felt ſuch a thing as *Pleaſure* or *Pain*, he would not only have been ignorant of the Two greateſt Capacities of his Nature, but would have had no Handle in him for God to have taken hold of him by. It would have been to no purpoſe for God to have given him a Revelation concerning Heaven and Hell; for he could not then have any Notion of any ſuch thing, and ſo would not have believed it; or at leaſt he would have had but

ſuch

ſuch a Faint, Languid and Confuſe Senſe of it, as would have ſtood him in little or no ſtead towards the Order and Government of his Life. But now having already taſted of theſe *Two Cups*, having within himſelf this early Pledge, this Earneſt, this Anticipation of Happineſs and Miſery; he looks upon Heaven and Hell as poſſible Ideas, and ſo ſtands diſpoſed to admit of a Revelation concerning theſe Two States, whereof he has already ſome Image within himſelf, and whereof God does not fail to put him conſtantly in mind by every Pleaſure which he enjoys, and by every Pain which he ſuffers.

And whereas we do often want that Pleaſure which we naturally Love, and feel that Pain which we naturally Hate, we are hereby given to underſtand, that we are not to our ſelves the Authors of our own Senſations, (for if ſo, we ſhould never be in Pain, and never without Pleaſure,) but are altogether *Paſſive* in the Sentiments, and receive them from another Hand, and at anothers Pleaſure, that we are wholly ſubject to the Power and Will of ſome Superior Being, who acts in and upon our Souls, and affects us with Pleaſure and Pain, and ſo deſerves to be the Object of our Love and of our Fear, as having the Power to make us Happy or Miſerable. And if that Superior Being

Being be no other than God himſelf, (as I have plainly demonſtrated in another Diſcourſe,) then it follows that *God* ſpeaks and addreſſes himſelf to us in every Senſation of Pleaſure or Pain which he raiſes in us, thereby continually admoniſhing us in the moſt ſenſible and palpable manner of our intire Subjection to him, and utter Dependance upon him; that we are in his Hands as Clay in the Hands of the Potter, to be moulded and faſhion'd as he pleaſes, to receive what *Modification* of Soul he ſhall think fit, whether of Pleaſure or of Pain; that he has the moſt Abſolute Power over us, whereby he is able to make us either Happy or Miſerable, and conſequently that he only ought to be Loved, and he only to be feared by us. And thus God ſpeaks to Man by what ſeems moſt Natural to him, and is moſt Ordinary with him, ſenſible Pleaſure and Pain. As he does alſo

3. *By that inward Joy and Conſolation which attends the Good, and by that inward Trouble and Uneaſineſs that attends the bad ſtate of the Soul.* The thing here ſuppoſed, is matter of common and univerſal Experience; there is no Man but who is or may be ſenſible, that when the Moral State of his Soul is out of order, when either he leads an ill courſe of Life, or when his heart does not ſtand rightly diſpoſed for God

God and Goodneſs, he feels a certain inward Pain and Trouble in his Spirit, and is reſtleſs and uneaſie within himſelf, more or leſs, according to the degree of the Diſorder, and the greater or leſſer tenderneſs and ſenſibility of his Conſcience. This ſtate of Mind which every Sinner feels, the Pſalmiſt has moſt emphatically deſcribed in the account that he gives of himſelf during the Moral Indiſpoſition of his Soul. Pſal. 38. *Thine Arrows ſtick faſt in me, and thy Hand preſſes me ſore. There is no ſoundneſs in my Fleſh becauſe of thine Anger, neither is there any reſt in my Bones becauſe of my Sin. For mine Iniquities are gone over mine Head, as an heavy Burthen they are too heavy for me. My Wounds ſtink and are corrupt becauſe of my Fooliſhneſs. I am troubled, I am bow'd down greatly, I go Monrning all the Day long. For my Loins are fill'd with a Loathſom Diſeaſe, and there is no Soundneſs in my Fleſh. I am feeble and ſore broken, I have roar'd by reaſon of the Diſquietneſs of my Heart.* One would be ready to think by this diſmal Deſcription, that he that made it, had then laboured under ſome ſtrange Bodily Diſeaſe, Hurt or Pain; but 'tis very certain that the Words are Metaphorical, and under the Figure of a ſore, broken and wounded Body, repreſent that Pain and Anguiſh of Spirit the Prophet

was

was then under, and which every Soul in its Proportion feels, that is out of the way and order of God. According to that noted Saying of St. *Auſtin*, *Ita eſt, & ſic juſſiſti Domine, ut Pœna ſibi ſit omnis inordinatus Animus. So it is, and ſo thou haſt commanded O Lord, that every inordinate Mind ſhould be a Puniſhment to it ſelf.*

And ſo likewiſe on the contrary, when a Man's Soul is rightly affected, and in a true Moral Frame and Temper; when he has done a good Action, or ſpent a Day well in Works of Devotion or Charity, he feels an inward Joy and Complacency of Spirit, ſomething like the Pleaſure of *Health*, when the Body is well in Tune, (for indeed Holineſs is the Health of the Soul,) with a ſecret Whiſper of Applauſe and Approbation within himſelf; he finds a Chearful Day of Light and Warmth breaking in upon his Soul, and a certain Balmy Sweetneſs diſtilling upon all his Thoughts.

But now whence is this Pleaſure and this Pain that attends the good and bad ſtate of the Soul? Is it not from God? Yes it is. He (as I have elſewhere ſhewn,) is the true and ſole Cauſe of all our Senſations, and is alone able to make us Happy or Miſerable. 'Tis he therefore that raiſes this Pleaſure and this Pain in us, and that thus differently Rewards or Puniſhes the Souls of

of Men, as they are well or ill affected towards him: 'Tis he that diffuses this Bitterness through those Souls that have erred and strayed from him and his ways, thereby admonishing them that they are in an undue and unnatural state, and in a wrong way that will never lead them to himself, their true Good; and that therefore they should make haste to get out of it. And 'tis the same *He* that pours out the Oyl of Joy and Gladness upon Good and Virtuously disposed Souls, thereby admonishing them that they are in his Order, in a state and way that he likes and approves of, and that will not fail to bring them to himself, and that therefore they should go on and persevere in this Orderly Course. This I take to be both a true Account, and the Natural Construction of this Pleasure and this Pain which attends the Good or the Evil Disposition of the Soul. They are both raised in her by God, and that to no other end, but to admonish her of her Duty and Interest, that she may know when she conforms to his Order, and when she deviates from it. And thus the great God out of his infinite Love, and tender Regard for his Creaturs, is pleased to act the part of a *Guardian Angel General*, to do the Office of a Private Monitor to every particular Man, by Smiling upon him, and Comforting him,

him when he does well, and by Frowning upon him, and Checking him when he does ill, that so he may have both a *Mark* to *discern*, and an *Incouragement* to *do* his Duty.

These are the several ways whereby *Wisdom cries*, and *Understanding puts forth her Voice*. Thus God speaks and addresses himself to Man. But how does Man *Hear*? Why he turns the Deaf-Ear, and refuses the Voice of the Divine Charmer, Charm he never so wisely. He sets at naught all his Counsels, and will have none of his Reproofs; Prov. 1. 25. as *Wisdom* her self complains in the First Chapter of her Divine Sentences. The loud Calmour of the Senses, the Tumult and Hurry of the Passions, the Noise and Buz of the World, and the Cares and Troubles of this Busie Life, conspire together to drown both the still Whispers, and the louder Calls of God, and do so fill and ingage our narrow Capacities, that nothing else can be distinctly heard but what relates to the good of the Body, and the Animal part of Man. But there is a time coming on, when God will be heard, and that before the Awakening Trump of the Arch-Angel, when Sickness shall have brought down the swelling Tide of the Blood and Spirits, and thereby laid the Fury and Tempest of Nature; when the Stream of Vital Oyl shall run low, and

the great Wheel of Life turn gently round; when all is ſtill and quiet in the Man, then will God ſpeak to *Adam* in the Cool of the Day, in the Calm and Silence of his Paſſions, and will then be ſure to be heard by him. In the mean time, if Man will not be perſuaded to lend his Ear upon the account of the Greatneſs and Majeſty of him that ſpeaks, yet at leaſt let him hearken and attend for the moment and importance of the thing ſpoken. Which naturally leads me to the next Stage of my Diſcourſe, namely to conſider

2. *The Matter of this Addreſs from God to Man.* We have had a view of the ſeveral ways whereby God ſpeaks and makes continual Application to the World, and in them, of his Fatherly Care and Concern for the Happineſs and well-being of his Creatures, whom he would not thus importunately Viſit and Solicit, were he not truly deſirous of their preſent and future Good. And that he is ſo, the *Matter* of this Divine Addreſs will ſerve to convince us, as well as the various ways and manners whereby he makes it. But what is that? What is it that God ſpeaks to Men? It muſt be ſomething worthy of him, and worthy of them; ſomething fit for a God to communicate, and ſomething fit for a World of Rational Beings to hear. When

Wiſdom

Wiſdom cries, and Underſtanding puts forth her Voice; when God comes down with a Meſſage to Men, we may juſtly expect ſome very weighty and important Matter, ſomething anſwerable to the Quality of ſo great a Speaker, and ſomething that is of Moment and Conſequence for Men to know and be inform'd of. But what is it that he ſpeaks to them? Does he tell them τὰ βάθη τοῦ Θεοῦ, the deep things of God? Does he open and uncover to them his own Divine Eſſence, or the great Myſteries of the Trinity, the Eternal Generation of the Son? or the Proceſſion of the Holy Ghoſt? Does he declare to them the notion of Eternity and Infinity, or acquaint them with the Order and Hierarchy of the Angels? Does he unfold to them the Secrets of Nature, or the Intricacies of Providence? Does he inform them about the order and manner of the Divine Decrees, and of their Conſiſtence with Human Liberty? Does he give them an account why the Chriſtian Religion was no ſooner reveal'd, or why the Law was no ſooner given, or why the World it ſelf was no ſooner made? Does he tell them how the Soul now lives in the Body, or how it ſhall live hereafter without it, or whether it had any Being before ſhe came into it? In one Word, does he undertake to ſatisfy their

Curioſity about Nice and Subtile Queſtions, about dark Problems, and matters of high Notion and Theory, whether *Metaphyſical* or *Mathematical*? One is apt to fancy and expect that he ſhould; and did God ſet the ſame value upon ſuch things that Men do, no doubt but he would. But he well knew that theſe things to the Comprehenſion of which our preſent Capacities are not very well ſuited, and which the Condition of this preſent Life does not mightily want, and which are of no great Service for the future; he knew that our Eyes were too weak to bear much Light, and our Heads too ſhallow to hold much Theory; and that a little would but ſerve to puff us up. He knew that our Faculties were too narrow to comprehend ſuch great Diſcoveries, and that an imperfect glimpſe of them would but fill us with Vanity. In ſhort, that the Knowledge of theſe things (to uſe the Words of the Pſalmiſt,) was too wonderful and excellent for us, that we cannot attain unto it, and withal that it would not ſignify much to our Happineſs, if we could. And therefore conſidering the preſent incapacity of Man for theſe things, and the little neceſſity of theſe things to Man, God has not thought fit to reveal theſe things to us, or to make them Matter of his great Addreſs to the World.

It

It would have been very eaſie for the Eternal Wiſdom of God, who was at the making of the World, (for *when he prepared the Heavens, I was there*, Prov. 8. 27. ſays ſhe,) and by whom the Apoſtle tells us the Worlds were made, *Heb.* 1. 2. and who therefore could beſt unfold the Myſteries of the Creation; I ſay it would have been very eaſie, and (if ever) very ſeaſonable for this Eternal Wiſdom when ſhe came down from Heaven to be Cloathed with Fleſh, and to live and converſe among Men, to have brought down with her a Syſtem of Nature, and to have taught Men the Secrets of Philoſophy. It would have been an eaſie matter for Jeſus Chriſt in whom it pleaſed the Father all fullneſs ſhould dwell, and *in whom are hid all the Treaſures of Wiſdom and Knowledge*, Col. 2. 3. during the time of his Abode upon Earth, to have inſtructed the World in Natural as well as Divine Knowledge, to have taught Men Arts and Sciences, as well as Morality and Religion, and to have ſet up a *School*, as well as a *Church*. But to the contrary, it is very remarkable, that during our Saviour's whole ſtay upon Earth, and in all that various Converſation which he had with the Inhabitants of it, he never drop'd one Word concerning theſe things, never open'd his Divine Lips concerning any Matter, but what related to

Morality and good Life, and would reveal no Myſteries to us but that great one of *Godlineſs*.

Our Saviour had once a very fair Opportunity, (I had almoſt ſaid a Temptation,) to ſatisfy the Curioſity of the World, in the great Theory of the *Præ-exiſtence* of Human Souls, when that Queſtion was put to him by his Diſciples concerning the Blind Man, *Maſter, who did Sin, this Man or his Parents, that he was born Blind?* Joh. 9. 2. The Queſtion ſuppoſes the Man in a capacity of Sinning before his coming into this State, therefore in actual Being, and conſequently proceeds upon the Suppoſition of *Præ-exiſtence*, which was alſo the generally receiv'd Opinion of the *Jews* at that time, as well as a very Venerable and much Celebrated Doctrin in the *Gentile Philoſophy*. Here therefore one would have expected that our Saviour having ſo fair an occaſion offer'd him, ſhould have taken the *Chair*, and have given the Inquiſitive World a clear Determination concerning this great Queſtion; but ſo far was he from this, that he utterly declines the Controverſie, by ſo contriving his Anſwer, that neither one nor the other part of the Contradiction might be concluded from it; *Neither has this Man ſinned*, ſays he, *nor his Parents, but that the Works of God ſhould be made manifeſt in him.* Wherein the only thing

thing decided is, that 'twas neither upon the account of the Man's nor his Parent's Sin that he was born Blind; but whether his Soul did præ-exiſt before its Union with this Body or no, (which was both the Suppoſition and the main drift of the Queſtion,) this he wholly declines, and paſſes over with Silence, as indeed he does all Matters of meer Notion and Speculation.

For indeed it would not have ſuited with the Character of our Saviour's Perſon, nor with the end of his Appearance in the World, to ſet up for a Broacher of Notions and Theories, and erect a Society of *Virtuoſo's*; the grand Deſign of his Incarnation being to reſtore the Ruins of Human Nature, to re-eſtabliſh that Order which Sin had overturn'd, to ſatisfy the Divine Juſtice for the Sin of Man, and to redeem him from the Power as well as from the Guilt of it; to purify our Hearts, and to ſanctify our Natures, and thereby to make us *Meet Partakers* of that Inheritance with the Saints in Light, which he had purchaſed for us, and not to fill our Heads with Curioſities, or to feed our Mouths again with the unhappy Fruits of the Tree of Knowledge.

'Tis indeed very true, that Chriſtian Morality is highly uſeful to the Perfection of the *Underſtanding*, as well as to the Con-

verſion of the *Heart*; that when all is done, the love of God is the beſt Light of the Soul, and Purity of Heart and Life, the beſt *Key* of *Knowledge*, even Human and Natural, as well as Spiritual and Divine; and that we cannot arrive to a Philoſophical Brightneſs and Clarity of Mind, and to a right Diſcernment of things, by any Better or more Compendious way, than by following the Precepts and Inſtructions of Chriſt, and by Conforming our ſelves to the Order of his Goſpel. And in this reſpect, he may be ſaid to lead us to the Knowledge of *Natural* things, and to open to us the receſſes of *Learning* and *Science*. But this is only indirectly and accidentally, by reaſon of the tranſcendent Excellency and Perfection of the Goſpel of Chriſt, and the univerſality of its influence, whereby it extends it ſelf to every thing that any way contributes to the Perfection of the Mind, as being a Remedy proportion'd to all its Defects, and a Medicine directly oppoſed to the Cauſe of all its Diſorder. And all manner of Ignorance being in its Meaſure ſome Defect and Diſorder of the Soul, it was neceſſary that ſo Perfect a Diſpenſation as the Goſpel of Chriſt ſhould have a proper tendency to the removal of it. But yet however it was no part of the principal, nor of the profeſt Deſign of Chriſt, to inſtruct the World in *Speculative Truths*; tho being to de-

deliver to Mankind a Syſteme of Precepts that was proper for the reparation of Human Nature, it was fit he ſhould accommodate them to all its Defects, and that they ſhould have a tendency, indirectly at leaſt, to procure us all the Perfection we are capable of.

This Notion is well taken notice of, and well expreſſed by the Excellent Author of *Converſations Chretiennes*, Pag. 304. *Il eſt neceſſaire de ſuivre les Conſeils de Jeſus Chriſt, pour acquerir cette Perfection de L'eſprit, qui conſiſte dans la Connoiſſance de la Verite. Cependant Jeſus Chriſt n'eſt pas venu pour faire de nous des Philoſophes; Ses Conſeils ne tendent qu' indirectement & à cauſe de leur Univerſalite, a nous rendre Sçavans. It is neceſſary to follow the Counſels of Jeſus Chriſt, that we may acquire that Perfection of Mind which conſiſts in the Knowledge of Truth. Nevertheleſs Jeſus Chriſt came not to make us Philoſophers, his Counſels tend only Indirectly, and by reaſon of their Univerſality to make us Learned.*

And the ſame excellent Perſon ſuggeſts to us a little after, a very good Reaſon why our Saviour Chriſt was not to inſtruct us in Natural and Human Learning. *Nous demeurerons eternellement tels que nous ſerons dans le Moment que nôtre ame quittera notre Corps, &c. We ſhall eternally remain ſuch, as we ſhall be in the Moment that our Soul ſhall leave*

leave our Body. If we love God in this Moment, we ſhall love him always; for the motion of Spirits is only unconſtant and meritorious for this Life. But all Human Sciences are in themſelves unprofitable to regulate this Moment upon which depends our Eternity: They merit us not the Aſſiſtances of Heaven for this Moment; they incline not our Hearts towards God. So Jeſus Chriſt was not to guide us directly to this Perfection of the Mind which is barren for Eternity, and ceaſes at the Moment of Death. He was to recommend to us a Privation from ſenſible Good, to the end that our Hearts may be fill'd with his Love, being empty of every thing elſe; and that adhering to nothing in the Moment that commences Eternity, our Love may carry us towards God, who is the Source of all Happineſs.

This Conſideration of this Excellent Perſon more diſtinctly unfolded, reſolves into this Order of Reaſoning. He Firſt of all ſuppoſes, that the Eternal ſtate of Man, is the only ſtate of Man that is conſiderable, or that deſerves to be regarded by God. Secondly, He ſuppoſes, that this Eternal ſtate of Man depends upon the Diſpoſition the Soul ſhall be in at the very Moment of her Separation from the Body. Thirdly, He ſuppoſes that Human Sciences, have little or no tendency to put the Soul in a right Diſpoſition for that Critical Moment. Whence

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in the laſt place he infers, That to inſtruct Men in Human Sciences, was not a thing worthy of our Saviours Care, as being altogether Calculated for this Life, and having little or no relation to Eternity, the only conſiderable ſtate of Man. This is the Subſtance of this Author's reaſoning, which (like every thing of his,) is ſo Solid and Conſequential, that it loſes nothing by being caſt into a more Logical View.

But to return to the thing before us; the great deſign of God in all his Applications to Mankind, particularly in that ſignal Addreſs of his to the World by his Son, was to reduce us to our true Good, to refix us in our Principle, to reunite us to himſelf, and ſo to ſecure our Eternal State, the only intereſt of Man that deſerves to be Regarded or Provided for. And therefore ſince Human Sciences contribute little or nothing to the Promotion of theſe Ends, it was altogether beſide the Deſign of God to make any particular Diſcovery or Revelation of them to us, and accordingly he has not.

Not as if the Knowledge of theſe things were no *accompliſhment* of the Soul, or that God *envies* us any Perfection. Neither of theſe ought to be ſuppoſed. All Truth in ſome meaſure perfects the Underſtanding, and God is willing we ſhould have all the Perfection whereof our Natures are capable:

But

But he would not have our preſent narrow Faculties divided and diſtracted in the proſecution of our greateſt Good, or to be hinder'd by leſs concerning Occupations, from attending upon what is of far greater Conſequence.

I ſay of far greater Conſequence, and that not only in reſpect of the proper value of the things themſelves, but alſo as to the *Opportunity* of their attainment: For now is the only opportunity of ſecuring a happy Eternity; but now is not the only opportunity of ſecuring the Knowledge of Human Sciences. Whatever is done in order to a happy Eternity, muſt be done now, there is no other Seaſon for it; but as to Speculation and Science, we may attain to that *Hereafter*, and certainly ſhall, if the other part be but ſecured. If God can but once bring us and unite us to himſelf, he thereby ſecures our whole Intereſt; for in uniting us to himſelf, he unites us to all *Good*, and conſequently to all *Truth*, which will include the Perfection of our Underſtandings as well as of our Wills, and ſerve to make us *Knowing* as well as *Happy*.

The great thing therefore that God has to take care of in reference to Man, is to bring and unite him to himſelf, to ſecure his Eternal ſtate, as that which is every way his greateſt Intereſt, and which draws after it

it the whole. And therefore when he addreſſes himſelf to us, it is not worthy of his Wiſdom (which ſets a true value upon things) to take notice of any thing but what directly leads to this great End; and therefore not of Human Arts and Sciences, which at the moſt can contribute to it but remotely and indirectly; but only of thoſe *Moral Qualifications* of Mind, and thoſe Duties of *Practical Life* which are Naturally, and therefore indiſpenſably neceſſary to make us capable of Happineſs, and to put us in a fit Diſpoſition and Order for Eternity. Theſe are the only things that Man is concerned to know, and therefore theſe are the only things that God has thought proper to reveal to him, or to treat with him about; which by the way may be ſufficient Satisfaction to thoſe Pert Forward Wits, who take this as an occaſion of diſparaging and, thinking meanly of Scripture, becauſe it does not inſtruct the World in Arts and Sciences, or hold out to us a Syſtem of Philoſophy.

But, to make another *By-Reflection*, does not this give us a Meaſure as to our own Conduct, as well as juſtify the Meaſure that God has taken? May we not hence collect what is the great Concern, and what ought to be the great Buſineſs of Man in this World? For may we not argue backward as well as forward? And will not the

the Argument hold both ways? We have ſhewn that the things relating to Moral Life and Practice, are the only things God has revealed, becauſe they are the only things that are neceſſary for Man to know; and will it not as well follow that they are the only things neceſſary for Man to know, becauſe they are the only things which God has Reveal'd? The Argument indeed is leſs Artificial, becauſe it is taken from *Authority*, but it is nevertheleſs concluding, becauſe that Authority is Divine and Infallible. The infinite Wiſdom and Goodneſs of God oblige us to think, that he has Reveal'd whatever is neceſſary for Man to know; and therefore ſince the things relating to Life and Manners are the only things that God has reveal'd, we have hence a ſafe Warrant to conclude that theſe are the only things neceſſary for Man to know. And if theſe are the only things neceſſary for Man to *know*, then are not theſe alſo the only things neceſſary for Man to *ſtudy* and imploy his Thoughts about? And will not this ſeverely condemn the Conduct of thoſe (upon whom the World beſtows the Character of *Great* Men,) who lay out their time and their Thoughts upon ſuch Studies as ſignify little or nothing, to the *Moralizing* of their Minds, and the diſpoſing their Souls for Eternal Happineſs, the only

End

End that can juſtify any of our Studies, or any of our Undertakings? Yes it will; but I need not perſue this Remark any further, having profeſſedly diſcours'd it in a particular Treatiſe. *Reflect. on the Conduct of Human Life.*

We have then here before us the true *Subject Matter* of this great Addreſs from God to Man, which you ſee is no other than the things which relate to this Moral Conduct, to the regulation of his Life, and Manners, as being the only *Means* that have an immediate Connexion with his Great *End*. Theſe are the Matters which God treats with us about, which he opens and ſets before us, and continually inculcates to us, as being of the greateſt concernment both to be *known* and *practiſed*. Theſe are the things concerning which *Wiſdom cries, and Underſtanding puts forth her Voice*, when ſhe calls and directs her Voice to the Sons of Men. And ſo the Scripture repreſents it. *He hath ſhewn thee O Man what is good*; Micah 6. not what is Notional or Speculative, but what is *good*. And ſo again, *unto Man he ſaid, behold, the Fear of the Lord, that is Wiſdom, and to depart from Evil, that is Underſtanding*, Job. 28. And the Eternal Wiſdom of God ſays of her ſelf, that ſhe dwells with Prudence, which denotes that Knowledge of Man which is *Practical*, and conſiſts

consists in proposing a right end, and in prosecuting it by fit and proper Means. *I Wisdom dwell with Prudence*, Prov. 8. 12. But we need go no further than the last Clause of our Text, which most expressly makes this to be the Matter of the Divine Address to the World, *O ye Simple understand Wisdom, and ye Fools be ye of an Understanding Heart.* Where 'tis observable, that not the *Head*, but the *Heart* is here made the Seat and Subject of Understanding; which plainly shews it to be meant not of Notional or Speculative, but only of Practical Wisdom, that Wisdom which (as St. *James* observes, Jam. 3. 13.) shews it self in a good Life and Conversation.

And indeed when all's done, a Good Life is the best Proof of a Good Understanding, and a Pure Heart the most satisfying Argument of a Clear Head. For a Man that will act regularly, must think rightly, and carry his Thoughts about him too. He must have a true Idea of things, and of their Relations and Proportions to each other; he must know what is his Good, and what is his Evil; what is his true Interest, and what the most propor means to secure it. He must know himself and all the Capacities and Relations in which he stands, both towards God and his Fellow Creatures, and all the Duties that result

reſult from thoſe Relations, and the ſeveral Reaſons, Arguments and Motives of thoſe Duties: He muſt know how to diſtinguiſh between Truth and Probability, between Shadow and Subſtance, between Reality and Appearance. He muſt be a Perfect Maſter of *Proportion*, and thoroughly comprehend the Art of *Meaſuring at a Diſtance*, which is harder in Morality than in Geometry. He muſt underſtand how to value a Futurity, and to take the juſt *Height* of a *Reverſion*, that ſo he may rate things according to their true moment, and not be ſo far impoſed upon in his Choice, as to prefer the Pleaſures of this ſhort Life before a Happy Eternity, becauſe of that advantagious Ground upon which they ſtand, the Recommendation of being *Preſent*. All this he muſt know, and all this he muſt conſider. I ſay *conſider*, for he muſt have a good *Preſence* of *Mind* with him, as well as Exactneſs of Judgment, and not be actually ignorant of what he habitually knows; for then he will act as abſurdly, as if he had not known it. For 'tis all one, as to the purpoſe of Well-living, not to have right Notices and Apprehenſions of things, or not to have an actual view and ſenſe of them. He muſt therefore *Conſider* as well as *Underſtand*, and have his Thoughts about him, as well as in him. He muſt not only walk

with a good Light, but muſt bear it always before him, and have it continually ſhining in his Eyes, that ſo he may not make a falſe Step for want of having his Light preſent. In one Word, he muſt have a right Judgment in all things, and an actual view of what he knows. If he be not thus qualified, I do not ſee how he can Live and Act well; and if he be, I do not ſee what is wanting to make and denominate him truly *Wiſe*.

The truth is, there is not ſuch a mighty difference between Speculative and Practical Wiſdom, that he that has the latter ſhould be ſuſpected of wanting the former: For my part I can apprehend no other difference but this, that the latter adds to the former the advantage of *Conſideration*. If he that is Speculatively Wiſe, did but joyn Conſideration to his Notion, he would quickly become Practically ſo; if he did but duly weigh the Truths that he knows, and attend to their Conſequences, if he were always awake, and had his Eyes always open, if he had his Knowledge actually before him, that is, if he did *Conſider*, (for Conſideration is nothing elſe but actual Knowledge,) he could not chuſe but act regularly, and in Conformity to his Light. For 'tis while the Underſtanding takes a nod, and the Light of the Mind is eclips'd, that

that the Will ſtarts aſide and goes aſtray, all Sin being the reſult of Ignorance, of one ſort or other, either *Actual* or *Habitual*. So that the Practically Wiſe Man is all that the Speculatively Wiſe Man is, and ſomething more, as having not only a right Apprehenſion of things, but an Actual View of what he knows. And tho he that has a good Underſtanding is not always a good Man, yet he that is a Good Man, muſt be a Man of good Underſtanding. According to that of the Pſalmiſt, *A good Underſtanding have all they that do his Commandments*, Pſal. 111. 10.

And indeed they are the only Perſons that truly deſerve that Character: And accordingly 'tis obſervable that Holy Scripture (which repreſents things always according to their true Ideas, and in a true Light) never makes mention of *Wiſdom* with any Mark of Commendation or Excellence, but it always means by it, either the actual Practice of our Duty, and the leading a good Life, or at furtheſt the Study and Knowledge of thoſe Truths which have a direct Tendency to it, and carry an immediate Connexion with it.

The Gentlemen of the *Port Royal* deliver themſelves ſo well upon upon this occaſion, that 'tis worth while to hear what they ſay. *Moral Eſſays*, Vol. 2. Pag. 311.

The Holy Scripture only calls that Science, which teaches us how to Live, accounting all that are ignorant of it Fools and Mad Men. Nor would Man, were he Rational, Speak any other Language than this. For it is moſt conformable to Reaſon and Nature, and 'tis only his Blindneſs that has brought another Dialect into Faſhion. This is very truly and very judiciouſly remaak'd, and may ſerve to ſatisfie us why God does here repreſent the practice of a Good Life, (which he makes the Matter of his Addreſs to Man,) under the Title and Appellation of Wiſdom and Underſtanding. *O ye Simple underſtand Wiſdom, and ye Fools be ye of an underſtanding Heart.* Wherein he alſo acts the Rhetorician, recommending the Matter of his Addreſs under the perſwaſive inſinuation of Wiſdom, a thing we all deſire and pretend to, that ſo it might have a more advantagious *Hearing*, and gain the greater acceptance in the World; which leads me to conſider

3. *The great Concern that lies upon the World to attend to, and comply with this Divine Addreſs:* Which I ſhall diſpatch in a very few Words, out of Reverence to the Subject of my Diſcourſe, being willing to ſuppoſe that an Addreſs from God may be ſufficient to make its own way into the Hearts of Men, without the Aſſiſtance of any

any Human Recommendation. And certainly, if ever Man be concern'd to Hear and be Attentive, it is now; and that whether we conſider the Majeſty of the *Speaker*, or the Moment of the Addreſs.

Firſt, the Majeſty of the Speaker, who it ſeems is no other that the Eternal and Eſſential Wiſdom of God. And ſhall Man be *Deaf* when *God* ſpeaks? When then will he hear, and to whoſe Voice will he give his Attention? If the Great God can condeſcend to addreſs himſelf to a Creature, ſure one would think that Creature might well afford to hearken to the Application of his God. We hearken to the Voice of our Fellow-Creatures continually, and reckon it as a neceſſary Civility to do ſo; and ſhall we not all ſhew the ſame regard to our common Creator? God hears us, when we addreſs our ſelves to him, and ſhall not we hear him when he addreſſes himſelf to us? Shall we, can we be Deaf to ſuch a Speaker? When Wiſdom cries, and Underſtanding puts forth her Voice, ſhall we then refuſe to Hear? Or (which is worſe,) ſhall we hear, and deſpiſe, forget and neglect to do? Certainly we do not conſider the Quality of him that ſpeaks to us, if we can be thus liſtleſs and regardleſs of what he ſays. As we do neither

Secondly, The Moment of the Addreſs it ſelf; which is concerning the greateſt, per-

haps the only Intereſt we have at ſtake. For 'tis not God's own ſuit that he thus earneſtly ſolicits with us, neither is it for his own advantage that he makes theſe continual Applications to us. But it is our Intereſt and our Concern that he eſpouſes; and as 'tis *to* us that he ſpeaks, ſo 'tis *for* us, and for our Good, and the greateſt Good too that we are capable of. That which he courts us to, and importunes us for, is that we would be *Happy*, and that we would take ſuch a *Courſe* as will make us ſo; That we would live and act wiſely and like our ſelves, that is, like rational Creatures, according to the Order of our Being, and the Perfection of our Nature. That we would fit and diſpoſe our ſelves for the Happineſs he has prepared for us, bring our ſelves within the Compaſs of his Love and Mercy, and demean our ſelves for this ſhort time, that he may reward us with a Bleſſed Eternity. This is the thing which God treats with us about, this is the Burthen of all his Applications. He that firſt ſpake us into Being, would fain now ſpake us into the Order and Perfection of Being, into Happineſs. And is not ſuch an Addreſs as this moſt worthy of our Attention and Compliance, meerly upon the account of its own Moment, tho it came from ſome *inferiour* Being, and had no recommendation from the

the Divinity of the Speaker? Much more then, ſince it comes to us from *above*, from the very Eternal and Subſtantial *Wiſdom* of God, who though too Great to gain by our Happineſs, is yet too good to ſee us Miſerable.

See then that ye refuſe not him that Speaketh; Heb. 12. for 'tis not a light thing to reject ſuch an Addreſs from ſuch a *Speaker*. But if we ſhould be ſo ſtupid and diſ-ingenuous, *Wiſdom* her ſelf has forewarn'd us what we muſt truſt to, and what return we muſt expect. *Becauſe I have call'd and ye refuſed, I have ſtretch'd out my Hand and no Man regarded. But ye have ſet at naught my Counſel, and would none of my Reproof, I alſo will laugh at your Calamity, I will mock when your Fear cometh*, Prov. 1. 24.

There is a time coming on, when we ſhall be very willing that God ſhould hear us, and that is at the *Hour* of *Death*; and there will be a time when we muſt and ſhall hear him, namely, in the *Day* of *Judgment*, when he ſhall ſit in the Court of his Juſtice, and give final Sentence upon us. And therefore as we would have God readily to hear us at the Hour of *our* Death, and as we would comfortably hear him in the Day of *his* Judgment, ſo it concerns us to hear him now in this his Day of Addreſs and Treaty with us, while he beſpeaks us by all the variety of

Application, while Wisdom cries, and while Understanding puts forth her Voice.

Let us all then seriously consider and comply with this Divine Address, and let this be the return of every Soul, *Speak Lord for thy Servant heareth.* Amen.

Postscript.

POSTSCRIPT *to the Firſt Diſcourſe.*

FOR a further Juſtification of the Meaſures laid down concerning the Love of God in our Account of that Firſt and Great Commandment which injoyns it, I ſhall now offer another Conſideration taken from the *Will* of God, and our Obligation of being conformable with it. I beg leave here to *ſuppoſe* that the Will of God is the Meaſure of all *Good*, as the Underſtanding of God is the Meaſure of all *Truth*. Not as if I thought either the Underſtanding or the Will of God to be (as is the Opinion of ſome) in ſuch a Senſe the Meaſure of Truth or Good, that what God conceives as True, ſhould be therefore True becauſe he ſo conceives it, or that what he wills, ſhould be therefore Good becauſe he wills it, which would be a Suppoſition of very miſchievous Conſequence as well in reſpect of Morality and Religion, as of Science and Speculation. But only that as the Underſtanding of God is ſo exact and infallible, that he can form no Judgment but what is according to Truth, ſo the Will of God is alſo ſo orderly and regular (as following the Conduct of an unerring Light,) that he can will nothing but what

what is Good. And that therefore as we can ſafely argue *a Poſteriori*, that ſuch a Propoſition is true, becauſe God ſo conceives it, ſo we may in like manner argue from the Will of God, that ſuch a thing is Good, becauſe he wills it. In this Senſe I ſuppoſe we may warrantably ſay, that *whatever God wills is Good*; not as if it were therefore Good becauſe he wills it, but becauſe ſuch is his Perfection that he can will nothing but what is ſo *antecedently* in its own Nature. So that the Will of God may and muſt be admitted as a juſt Standard and Meaſure, tho not as the *Cauſe* of all Good.

But now if the Will of God be the Standard and Meaſure of all Good, as the Underſtanding of God is the Meaſure of all Truth, then 'twill follow, that it is as much the Perfection of our Will to be conformable to the Will of God, as 'tis the Perfection of our Underſtanding to be conformable to the Underſtanding of God; that the former does perfect the Soul as much in a *Moral* way, as the latter does in an *Intellectual* way; and that therefore if we would ſincerely conſult the Perfection of our Rational Nature, we ſhould at leaſt as much endeavour to conform our Wills to the Will of God, as to conform our Underſtandings to the Underſtanding of God; to will as God wills, as to think or conceive as God thinks or conceives. For

if

if Good be as perfective of the Will, as Truth is of the Underſtanding, then the Perfection of the Will muſt as much conſiſt in Conformity with that which is the Meaſure of Good (whatever it be) as the Perfection of the Underſtanding does conſiſt in its Conformity with the Meaſure of Truth. And ſince this Meaſure of Good is acknowledged to be no other than the Supream Will, the Will of God, it is evident that Conformity with his Will muſt be as much the Perfection of our Will, as Conformity with his Underſtanding is the Perfection of our Underſtanding. Whence it will follow, that as our Underſtandings cannot vary, tho never ſo little from the Divine Underſtanding without falling into *Error*, ſo our Wills cannot decline, tho never ſo little from the Divine Will, without falling into *Sin*. As all Deviation from the Underſtanding of God is an *Intellectual*, ſo all Deviation from the Will of God will be a *Moral* Diſorder. We ought therefore to be thoroughly Conformable with this great and univerſal Standard of Morality, to tune our Wills to a perfect *Uniſon* with the Will of God, and in every reſpect to will the ſame that he Wills, if we would be exact Followers of Order, and contain our Souls within the ſtrict Bounds of what is juſt and fit. And there is a time coming when we ſhall do ſo,

when

when *Self* ſhall be quite extinguiſh'd in us, when we ſhall maintain no private or particular Motions, but ſhall follow the Order and Motion of God, and be carried along as it were with this great *Vortex*, having our Wills intirely reſolv'd into the Divine, without ſo much as the leaſt *Velleity* left of our own, that ſo the Will of God, as God himſelf, may be *All in All*.

This Conformity of the Human Will with the Divine, is a Subject much handled and inculcated in the Writings of the *Myſtics*, and the Jeſuit *Drexelius* has written a very uſeful Book upon it. And indeed thoſe ſort of Men are generally very happy in *Devotional Compoſitions*, and particularly upon the preſent Subject, of conforming our Wills to the Divine, which they treat of in a very ſavoury and affectionate way, only I think they have here generally this Fault, that they look upon it as a *particular* Virtue, and repreſent it a little too much after the manner of *Counſel*, as ſomething Heroically Excellent, as the Top and Height of Chriſtian Perfection; whereas indeed it is a Virtue of the moſt General and Tranſcendental Nature, ſuch as comprizes within its Latitude *the whole Duty*, and nothing but the Duty of *Man*. *Idem velle quod vult Deus*, is the Sum and Abridgment of all Morality, and ought to be as a *Motto* inſcribed upon every Soul

Soul, as including neither leſs nor more than what is the ſtrict and neceſſary Duty of every Intelligent Creature. As an intire Conformity of our Will with the Will of God, involves the whole Moral Perfection of Man, ſo Diſconformity from the Will of God, is commenſurate to the whole compaſs of Sin; and there cannot be the leaſt Diſconformity of our Will from this Meaſure without Diſorder. If we think otherwiſe than God thinks, we err or think amiſs; and if we will otherwiſe than God wills, we ſin or will amiſs, ſince we do then as much recede from the Supream Meaſure of Good, as in the other caſe we do from the Supream Meaſure of Truth. It is therefore not only Matter of Counſel and Perfection, but our ſtrict and neceſſary Duty to follow the Order of God, and to have our Wills intirely Conformable, and as it were *Perpendicular* to his.

Well, if ſo, then we ought to love what God loves, and nothing but what God loves, and to love that with all *our* Capacity which God loves with all his. This is clear at Sight. But now 'tis moſt certain that God loves himſelf, becauſe he is truly Lovely; and therefore we ought alſo to love God. And 'tis as certain that God loves himſef infinitely, becauſe he is infinitely Lovely. And therefore we ought to love God

God with our Infinite, that is, with our whole Love, and to our utmoſt. For 'tis nothing but utter Impoſſibility, nothing but an Eſſential Incapacity, nothing but our being *Creatures*, that can excuſe us from loving God in a degree of Love ſtrictly infinite, there being no other truly worthy of God. But ſince we cannot do that, we ſhould detain no part or degree of what is finite, but love God with our whole Love, as he loves himſelf with every degree of his own Love.

'Tis alſo moſt certain that God as being an infinitely Perfect and Self-ſufficient Being, can love nothing but himſelf, as Love is (here) taken for *Wiſhing* or *Deſiring*. God can deſire nothing but what is Good and Deſirable, and there being not the leaſt Degree of Good or Deſirable, but what is contained in himſelf, in his own infinite Nature, 'tis impoſſible that he ſhould deſire any thing out of himſelf. All Deſire of any thing *without*, proceeds from ſome Want or Defect *within*; and accordingly all Beings that are under ſuch a Defect, (which is the caſe of all Creatures,) are alſo *Eſſentially* ſubjected to deſire. If therefore God deſires any thing out of, or beſides himſelf, 'tis becauſe of ſome Eſſential Defect, becauſe he has not all that is Deſirable in himſelf. But God (as his Idea imports,) is a Being ab-

abſolutely Perfect, and every way Self-ſufficient; he contains all the degrees of Being, and conſequently all that is Good or Deſirable within himſelf, and therefore 'tis impoſſible that any thing without himſelf ſhould be the Object of his Deſire. We may conclude therefore, that as God loves himſelf, and loves himſelf Infinitely, with the whole and full application of his Love, ſo he loves himſelf withal ſo intirely, as to love nothing beſides, nothing out of himſelf.

Whence we are further led to conclude, that as this is God's Meaſure of loving himſelf, ſo this alſo ought to be our Meaſure of loving God: For if our Wills ought to be conformable throughout with the Will of God, and God loves nothing but himſelf, then 'tis plain that we ought to love nothing but God, or to expreſs it in the Language of the Text, that if God loves himſelf with his whole Heart, Soul and Mind, with the united and collected Strength and Energy of the whole Trinity, then we alſo ought with our whole Heart, Soul and Mind to love God; whom ſince we cannot love *Infinitely*, we ſhould at leaſt love *Intirely*.

FINIS.

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